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LECTURES ON ART

BY

H. TAINE

PROFESSOR OF ÆSTHETICS AND OF THE HISTORY OF ART IN THE ECOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS.

TRANSLATED BY

JOHN DURAND

SECOND SERIES

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN ITALY

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN THE NETHERLANDS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN GREECE.

NEW YORK
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1875.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

This volume completes a uniform edition of all works written by M. Taine which are translated into English. A list of them is given on the page facing the title. The present volume also completes, by the publication of the treatise, hitherto untranslated, upon the Philosophy of Art in Italy, all that M. Taine has written directly upon the subject of art. These works—originally lectures—include, beside those in this volume, treatises on the general principles of the Philosophy of Art and the Ideal in Art, and appear in this edition as the first series of "Lectures on Art."

Uniform with this edition, the publishers expect to issue, early in 1876, the first work of a series which M. Taine is now writing on the influences which have developed the present state of French society and politics, and which he includes under the general title of "*Les Origines de la France Contemporaine.*" The first work is upon the *Ancien Régime.* It will be followed by one upon the Revolution, and others bringing the discussion up to the present time.

NOVEMBER, 1875.

PHILOSOPHY OF ART

IN

ITALY

A MONSIEUR ÉDOUARD BERTIN

H. TAINE

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN ITALY.

GENTLEMEN:

Last year, at the beginning of this course of lectures, I set before you the general law according to which works of art are at all times produced, that is to say, the exact and necessary correspondence which is always seen between a work and the medium out of which it is evolved. This year, in pursuing the history of painting in Italy I find a striking instance which allows me to apply and verify the law in question.

I

We have now to consider the glorious epoch which men are agreed to look upon as the most beautiful of Italian creation, and which comprises, along with the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the first thirty or forty years of the sixteenth. Within this narrow limit the most accomplished artists flourished,—Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolomeo, Giorgione, Titian, Sebastian del Piombo, and Correggio; and this limit is clearly defined; and if you look backward or forward of it, you find it preceded by an incomplete art, and succeeded by a degenerate art; hitherto by those groping, and who are as yet dry, stiff and colorless,—Paolo Uccello, Antonio Pollaiolo, Fra Filippo Lippi, Ghirlandaijo, Verocchio, Mantegna, Perugino, Giovanni Bellini; subsequently, by exaggerating disciples or defective

restorers,—Giulio Romano, Il Rosso, Primaticcio, Parmegiano, Palma the younger, the Caracci, and their school. Up to this time art is a growth, and after, it declines, its bloom being between both periods and lasting for about fifty years. If, during the early period, we encounter an all but finished artist, Masaccio, it is due to meditation rather than to an impulse of genius, a solitary originator who instinctively sees beyond his age, an unrecognized precursor who is without followers, whose sepulchre, even, bears no inscription, who lived poor and alone and whose precocious greatness is to be comprehended only half a century later. If, in the following epoch, we find a flourishing and healthy school, it is at Venice, in a favored city overtaken by decline later than the others, and which yet for a long time remains free, tolerant and eminent after conquest, oppression and final corruption have, in the rest of Italy, degraded the soul and distorted the intellect. You may compare this epoch of creativeness, perfect and beautiful, to the zone in which the vine is cultivated on the slope of a mountain; below, the grape is not yet good, above, it is no longer

good; on the low ground the atmosphere is too dense, while on the upper it is too cold; such is the cause and such the law; if there are exceptions they are trifling and are easily explained. Perhaps, on the low ground, we may encounter a solitary stem which, owing to its excellent sap, will produce a few rich grapes in spite of its surroundings. But it will stand alone, will not be reproductive, and will be regarded as among the irregularities which the mass and confusion of active forces always interpose in the regular operation of nature's laws. Perhaps, on the upper ground, we may find in some out of the way place a few perfect vines; but it will be on some spot in which peculiar circumstances, the character of the soil, the protection of a wall, the possession of a spring, will furnish nourishment and protection to the plant which it cannot obtain elsewhere. The law, accordingly, remains intact, and the conclusion is that there is a kind of soil and of temperature with which the success of the plant is connected. In like manner the law which governs the production of a complete school of painting remains unchanged, thus enabling us to

discover the condition of mind and of manners on which the school depends.

First of all, we must have a clear idea of it. For, in calling it perfect or classic, according to the usual term, we do not note its characteristics, we only give it its rank. But if it has its rank it has also its characteristics, which means its proper domain from which it does not vary.

It disdains or neglects landscape; the painters of the great world of inanimate objects are to be found in Flanders; the Italian painter selects man for his subject; trees, the ground and structures are, to him, simply accessories; Michael Angelo, the undisputed monarch of the entire school, declares, according to Vasari, that these must be abandoned to the pleasure and profit of minor talents, and that the true object of art is the human figure. If landscape is taken up at a subsequent period it is under the later Venetians, and especially under the Caracci, when high art declines; and then they simply use it as decoration, a sort of architectural villa, an Armida's garden, a theatre for pastorals and pageantry, a noble and ingenious

accompaniment of mythological galanteries and seignorial pleasure-parties ; there symbolic trees belong to no distinct species, the mountains being arranged to please the eye, while temples, ruins and palaces are grouped together in ideal lines; nature loses her native independence and her peculiar instincts in order to be subordinated to man, to adorn his festivities and expand his apartments.

On the other hand, they still leave to the Flemings the copying of actual life,—the contemporary in his ordinary dress, in the midst of his daily duties, amongst veritable pieces of furniture, taking his walks, at market, at the table, at the town hall, in the tavern, just as the eye sees him, a gentleman, bourgeois, peasant, with the innumerable and striking particulars which belong to his character, profession and condition. They discard these details as vulgar; according as art becomes perfect they more and more avoid literal exactness and positive resemblance; it is just as this great epoch opens that they cease introducing portraits into their compositions; Filippo Lippi, Pollaiolo, Andrea dal Castagno, Verocchio, Giovanni Bellini, Ghirlandaijo,

Masaccio himself, all anterior painters, filled their frescoes with contemporary figures; the great step which separates perfected art from rude art is this creation of faultless forms which the eye of the soul discovers and which the physical eye cannot encounter.

Thus bounded, the field of classic painting must be still further limited. In the ideal which it takes for a centre, if there is any distinction between the body and the soul, it is easy to see that the first place is not awarded to the soul. This art is neither mystic, nor dramatic, nor spiritual. Its aim is not to present to the eye the incorporeal and sublime world, the innocent and ecstatic spirits, the theological or ecclesiastical dogmas, which, from Giotto and Simone Memmi down to Fra Angelico, constituted the subject matter of the excellent but incomplete art of the preceding age; it abandons the Christian and monastic period to enter on the laic and pagan period. Its aim is not to fix some violent or painful circumstance on a canvas, calculated to excite pity or terror, as with Delacroix in "The Murder of the Bishop of Liége," or as with Décamps in "La

Morte," or in the "Bataille des Cimbres," or as with Ary Scheffer in "Le Larmoyeur." Its aim is not to express profound, extreme, complicated sentiments, as with Delacroix in his "Hamlet," or in his "Tasso." These diversified or powerful effects are not sought for until the subsequent period, when the decadence becomes visible in the seductive, dreamy Magdalens, in the delicate, pensive Madonnas, and in the tragic and vehement martyrs of the Bolognese school. The pathetic art which serves to arrest and disturb a morbid and excited sensibility is opposed to its nature. It is not preoccupied with the moral order of things at the expense of the physical; it does not portray man as a superior being betrayed by his organs; one painter alone, the precocious originator of all modern wonders and ideas, Leonardo da Vinci, a subtle and universal genius, an isolated and insatiate investigator, pushes his divinations beyond his own age until he sometimes reaches our own. But with other artists, and frequently with himself, form is an end and not a means; it is not subordinated to physiognomy, to expression, to gesture, to the

situation, to action ; their work is picturesque, and not literary or poetic. "The main thing in the art of design," says Cellini, "is to cleverly fashion a naked man or woman." The point of departure with almost all of them is, in reality, goldsmith's work and sculpture; their hands have manipulated the relief of the muscles, traced the curvature of outlines, and felt the articulation of the bones; that which they desire to present to the eye is, first, the natural human body, that is to say, healthy, active and energetic, endowed with all animal and athletic aptitudes; and, besides this, the ideal human body, akin to the Greek type, so well proportioned and balanced in all its parts, selected and posed in such a happy attitude, draped and surrounded by other bodies so well grouped, that the whole forms a harmony, and the entire work conveys the idea of a corporeal world like that of ancient Olympus, that is to say, heroic or divine, in any case, superior and complete. Such is the peculiar genius of these artists. Others have better expressed, at one time, rural life, at another, the truth of real life, at another, the throes and depths of the

soul, at another, a moral lesson, a historical discovery, a philosophic conception. We find in Fra Angelico, in Albert Durer, in Rembrandt, in Metzu, in Paul Potter, in Hogarth, in Delacroix, and in Décamps, either more edification, more pedagogism, more psychology, more interior and domestic peace, more intense reverie, more transcendental metaphysics, or internal emotions. They have created for themselves a peculiar race, that of the aristocratic and noble bodies which live nobly, and which announce a prouder, stronger, serener, more active humanity, in short, completer than our own. It is of this race, joined to its elder born, the child of the Greek sculptors, that, in other countries, France, Spain and Italy, ideal figures have been born by which man teaches nature how she might have made him and how she has not accomplished it.

II.

Such is the work; it is for us, according to our method, to recognize its conditions.

Let us first consider the race of men who accomplished it; if, in the art of design they have taken this course, it is by virtue of national and enduring instincts. The imagination of the Italian is classic, that is to say, Latin, analogous to that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Evidence of this is found not alone in its renaissance work, its sculpture, edifices and paintings, but also in its mediæval architecture and in its modern music. In the middle ages the Gothic architecture which spread itself over Europe penetrated into Italy but slowly, through incomplete imitations; if we encounter there two churches completely Gothic, one at Milan and the other at the convent of Assisi, they are the work of foreign architects; even under the German invaders, at the extreme point of Christian enthu-

siasm, the Italians built in the ancient style; on reviving it they preserved the taste for substantial forms, full walls, moderate ornamentation and pure, natural light, and their edifices, through their aspect of strength, cheerfulness, serenity and unaffected elegance form a contrast with the grandiose complexity, the bristling fretwork, the gloomy sublimity, the sombre or transfigured daylight of northern cathedrals. In like manner, and in our days, their vocal music, distinctly rhythmic, pleasing even in the rendering of tragic sentiments, opposes its symmetries, its fullness, its cadences, its theatrical genius, eloquent, brilliant, limpid and limited, to German instrumental music, so imposing, so untrammeled, at times so vague, so well adapted to express the most delicate reveries, the most secret emotions, and I know not what of that grave soul which, in its solitary divinations and tremors, takes in the infinite and the great beyond. If we should consider the way in which the Italians, and, in general, the Latin races, comprehend love, morality, and religion; if we should study their literature, their manners, and their way of contemplating life,

we would see a similar kind of imagination declare itself through a multitude of profound traits. Its distinguishing trait is the talent and taste for arrangement, and therefore regularity and a harmonious, correct form; it is less flexible and penetrating than the German imagination; it is less attached to the inward than to the outward; it prefers exterior adornment to conscious truth; it is more idolatrous and less religious; more picturesque and less philosophic; it is less broad and more beautiful. It comprehends man better than nature; it better comprehends man in society than the barbarian. It has difficulty in accommodating itself, as the other does, to imitating and representing savagery, rusticity, the fantastic, the accidental, disorder, the eruption of spontaneous forces, the countless and incommunicable characteristics of the individual, creatures of the lower grade or without forms, the still and undefined life distributed to every order of being; it is not a universal mirror; its sympathies are circumscribed. But in its kingdom, which is that of form, it is sovereign; the spirit of other races, compared to it, is

coarse and brutal; it alone has discovered and manifested the natural order of ideas and of images. Of the two great races in which this is the most completely expressed, one, the French, more northern, more prosaic and more social, has had for its province the systematizing of pure ideas, that is to say, the method of reasoning and the art of conversation; the other, the Italian, more southern, more artistic and more given to imagery, has had for its province the ordination of sensible forms, that is to say, music and the arts of design. It is this native talent, visible from the beginning, permanent throughout its history, stamped on all sides of its thought and action, which, meeting with favorable circumstances at the end of the fifteenth century, produced a harvest of masterpieces. In fine, Italy then had, altogether or nearly at the same time, not only five or six great painters of extraordinary genius, superior to all we have since seen, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Correggio, but also a brotherhood of eminent and accomplished painters, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolomeo, Pontormo, Al-

bertinelli, il Rosso, Giulio Romano, Caravaggio, Primaticcio, Sebastian del Piombo, Palma Vecchio, Bonifazio, Paris Bordone, Tintoretto, Luini, and a hundred others less known, brought up with the same taste, possessors of the like style, and who constitute an army of which these are only the captains; and besides these there is an almost equal number of superior sculptors and architects, some a little earlier, but for the most part contemporary, Ghiberti, Donatello, Jacopa della Quercia, Baccio Bandinelli, Bambaja, Lucca della Robbià, Cellini, Brunelleschi, Bramante, San Gallo, Palladio, Sansovino; and finally, around these families of artists, so diversified and so fruitful, a crowd of connoisseurs, patrons and buyers, a vast public forming an escort, not alone of gentlemen and cultivated people, but of townsmen, artisans, simple monks, and the commonalty; so that fine taste, at this epoch, was natural, spontaneous, universal, the entire community, in its sympathy and intelligence, contributing to the works which the masters signed with their names. We cannot, accordingly, consider the art of the Renaissance as the result of a

happy accident; we have not here a cast of dice bringing on the stage of the world a few better-endowed intellects, an extraordinary batch of picturesque geniuses; we cannot deny that the cause of this great efflorescence is the general disposition of minds, a wonderful aptitude diffused throughout all the channels of the nation. This aptitude was momentary, and the art was momentary. It began and ended at fixed epochs; the art began and ended at the same fixed epochs. It developed itself in a certain sense; art developed herself in the same sense. It is like the body of which that is the shadow; she follows its birth, its growth, its decline, and its direction. It brings her on and leads her off, and makes her vary as she varies; she depends on it in all her parts and throughout her pathway. It is her essential and proper condition; and consequently it must be studied in detail in order that she may be understood and explained.

III.

Three conditions of things are necessary to enable man to appreciate and produce high art. He must, in the first place, be cultivated. Poor, brutalized rustics daily pressed to the earth, predatory chieftains, gluttons and wine bibbers occupied throughout the year with marching and fighting, are still too deeply sunk in animal life to comprehend the refinement of forms and the harmony of colors. A picture in a palace or in a church is an ornament, and to look at it with pleasure or intelligence the spectator must be partially free from grosser preoccupations; he must not be wholly absorbed with strifes and revelries; he must have advanced out of the primitive state of barbarism and oppression; apart from the exercise of his muscles, the gratification of bellicose instincts, and the satisfaction of his physical wants, he must crave noble

and refined pleasures. Once brutal, he is now thoughtful; once a consumer and destroyer, he now embellishes and enjoys; once merely existing, he now adorns his life. Such is the vast transformation which took place in Italy in the fifteenth century. Man, at this epoch, passes from feudal manners to the spirit of modern times, and this great change is effected in Italy sooner than anywhere else.

There are many causes for this change. The first one is the extreme acuteness and readiness of mind which characterizes the people of this country. Civilization seems to them innate; they, at least, attain to it almost without effort and almost without assistance. Even among peasants and the uncultivated, the intelligence is quick and free. Compare them with people of the same condition in the north of France, in Germany, and in England; the difference will become a contrast. In Italy a hotel boy, a peasant, a porter whom you meet in the street, knows how to talk, comprehend and reason; they advance opinions, they know mankind, they discuss politics; they manipulate ideas as they do language, by instinct, sometimes brilliantly, always with facil-

ity and almost always correctly; and above all they possess the natural and impassioned sentiment for the beautiful. Only in this country do we hear the populace exclaim before a picture or a church, "Oh God, how beautiful it is!" (*O Dio com' è bello!*) and the Italian language has for the expression of this transport of the heart and senses, an accent, a sonorousness, an emphasis perfectly admirable, whereof the saplessness of the same French words is powerless to render the effect.

This race, so intelligent, has had the advantage of not being Teutonized, that is to say, crushed and transformed to the same degree, as other European countries, by the invasion of the northern peoples. The Barbarians established themselves on the soil temporarily or imperfectly. The Visigoths, the Franks, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, all abandoned it or were soon driven away. If the Lombards remained there, they soon profited by the Latin culture; in the twelfth century, the Germans, under Frederic Barbarossa, expecting to find them men of their own race were surprised to see them so Latinized, "having discarded the fierceness of barbaric

ferocity and taken from the influences of the air and soil something of Roman finesse and gentleness; having preserved the elegance of the language and the urbanity of primitive manners, even imitating the skill of the ancient Romans in the constitution of their cities and in the government of their public affairs." Latin is spoken in Italy up to the thirteenth century; Saint Anthony of Padua preaches in Latin; the people, who jabber the growing Italian, always comprehend the literary language. The Germanic crust, extending over the nation, is thin or is early found pierced by the revival of the Latin civilization. Italy knows of the troubadour's songs (*chansons de geste*), the chivalric and feudal poems which overspread Europe, only in translations. I but just now stated to you that Gothic architecture found its way slowly into Italy and in an imperfect manner; from the eleventh century, when the Italians again began to build, it was with the forms or, at least, in the spirit of Latin architecture. We see there in institutions, in manners, in language and in art, in the darkest and bitterest night of the middle ages, antique civilization extricating itself, or

reviving, on the soil over which the Barbarians had swept and melted away like the winter snow.

Hence it is that if you compare Italy in the fifteenth century with other European nations you will find her more learned, wealthier, more polished and better qualified to embellish her life, that is to say, to appreciate and produce works of art.

At this moment England, issuing from the hundred years' war, entered into that horrible contest of the Two Roses in which people cut each other's throats in cool blood, and in which, when the battle ended, unarmed children were destroyed. Up to 1550 it is simply a country of boors, huntsmen, soldiers and cultivators. Only two or three chimneys could be counted in a town in the interior of the kingdom; gentlemen's country mansions consisted of tenements covered with thatch, plastered with the coarsest clay and only lighted through lattices. The middle classes slept on pallets of straw, "with a good round log for a bolster." "Pillows seem to have been made only for women in confinement," while dishes consisted not of pewter but of wood.

In Germany we see the atrocious and merciless Hussite war breaking out; the Emperor is without authority; the nobles are ignorant and insolent; even under Maximilian the right of the *fist* prevails, that is to say, the appeal to force and the custom of doing one's self justice. We see in Luther's Table Talk, also in the Memoirs of Hans von Schweinichen, to what extent gentlemen and the learned then carried drunkenness and brutality.

As to France she is going through the most disastrous period of her history. The country is conquered, devastated by the English. Under Charles VII. wolves enter the faubourgs of Paris. When the English are driven out the *écorcheurs*, military adventurers, live on the peasant, ransom him and pillage him as they please; one of these lordly brigands and assassins, Gilles de Retz, has given birth to the legend of Bluebeard. Up to the end of the century the *élite* of the nation, the nobles, remain rustic and uncultivated. The Venetian ambassadors report that all French noblemen have twisted and bowed legs because they pass their lives on horseback. Rabelais will show you in the middle

of the sixteenth century the gross obscenities and persistent brutality of Gothic manners and customs. Count Baldassare Castiglione wrote thus about 1525: "The French know no other merit than that of arms and take no account of other things, so that not only do they not esteem learning, but again they abhor learned men and regard them as the vilest of creatures; and they seem to think that there is no greater insult for a man, whoever he may be, than to call him *clerk*."

In sum, throughout Europe, the régime is still feudal, and men, like powerful savage brutes, think of but little besides eating, drinking and physical activity. Italy, on the contrary, is almost a modern country. With the supremacy of the Medicis peace is established in Florence; citizens rule and rule tranquilly; like their chiefs, the Medicis, they manufacture, trade, are bankers and make money to spend it like people of intelligence. The cares of war have not the same bitter and tragic hold on them as formerly. They wage war with the paid hands of the *condottieri* who are shrewd tradesmen and reduce it to "cavalcades;" if they kill each other it

is by mistake; battles are cited in which three soldiers and sometimes only one rest on the field. Diplomacy is a substitute for force. "Italian sovereigns believe," says Machiavelli, "that the quality of a prince consists in knowing how to appreciate a pointed repartee in a document, the composition of a fine letter, how to display vivacity and finesse in language, weave a network of fraud, bedeck themselves with gold and precious stones, sleep and eat more magnificently than others and organize around themselves every description of voluptuousness." They become connoisseurs, men of letters and lovers of learned conversation. For the first time since the fall of ancient civilization we find a society which gives the first place to intellectual pleasures. The men of mark of this age are the humanists, enthusiastic restorers of Greek and Roman belles-lettres, Poggio, Filelfo, Marcile Ficin, Pic de la Mirandole, Calchondyle, Ermolao Barbaro, Laurent Valla and Politicien. They rummage all the libraries of Europe to discover and publish manuscripts; not only do they decipher and study them, but they derive inspiration from them; they become antique

in mind and feeling; they write Latin with almost the same purity as the contemporaries of Cicero and Virgil. Style suddenly becomes exquisite and the intellect as suddenly mature. When we turn from the tedious hexameters and heavy, pretentious epistles of Petrarch to the elegant distich of Politicien or to the eloquent prose of Valla, we are conscious of a pleasure almost physical. The fingers and the ear involuntarily scan the easy march of poetic dactyls and the ample unfolding of oratorical periods. Language has become noble while it has also become clear, and erudition, passing from cloister to palace, ceases to be a medium of quibbling in order to be changed into an instrument of pleasure.

These savants, in fine, do not form a small and unknown class, shut up in libraries and remote from public consideration. Far from that. The title of humanist is sufficient at this epoch to draw to a man the attention and favors of princes. Duke Ludovic Sforza of Milan invites Merula and Demetrius Calchondyle to his university and appoints the learned Cecco Simoneta his minister. Leonardo

Aretino, Poggio and Machiavelli are, in turn, secretaries of the Florentine Republic. Antonio Beccadelli is secretary for the King of Naples. A pope, Nicholas V., is the great patron of Italian letters. One of these sends an ancient manuscript to the King of Naples, and the king returns thanks for the gift as a great favor. Cosmo de Medici establishes an academy of philosophy and Lorenzo revives the Platonic banquets. Landino, his friend, composes dialogues in which the characters, withdrawing to the Camaldoli convent, discuss for several days the question as to which of two lives is the better, that of action or that of meditation. Pietro, son of Lorenzo, institutes a discussion on true friendship in Santa Maria del Fiore and awards a silver crown as a prize to the victor. We see the princes of commerce and of the state gather around them philosophers, artists, and savants, here Pic de la Mirandola, Marsile Ficin, and Politicien, and there Leonardo da Vinci, Merula, and Pomponius Lœtus, to converse with them in an apartment decked with fine busts, over the recovered manuscripts of ancient wisdom, in choice and elegant language, with-

out ceremony or thought of rank, with that engaging and generous curiosity which, enlarging the field of science and making it attractive, transforms the arena of scholastic dissensions into a festival of thinkers.

It is not surprising if the vulgar tongue, almost abandoned since Petrarch, furnishes in its turn a new literature. Lorenzo de Medici, the leading banker and first magistrate of the city, is the first of the new Italian poets; alongside of him Pulci, Boiardo, Berni and, a little later, Bembo, Machiavelli and Ariosto, are the standard models of pure style, of serious and fanciful poetry, of biting satire and profound reflection. Below them a crowd of story-tellers, jesters and debauchees, Molza, Bibiena, Aretino, Franco and Bandello gain the favor of princes and public applause through their ribaldry, invention and wit. The sonnet is an instrument of praise or of satire which passes through all hands. It circulates among the artists; Cellini narrates that when his Perseus was exhibited there were twenty posted up the first day. No festival and no banquet was then complete without poetry; one day Pope

Leo X. gave five hundred ducats to the poet Tebaldeo for an epigram which had given him pleasure. At Rome, another poet, Bernardo Accolti, was so admired that when he read in public people closed their shops to go and hear him; he read in a large apartment by torch-light: prelates, surrounded by the Swiss Guard, attended; they called him the unique. His too clever verses flashed with refined conceits (*concetti*); and those literary charms, similar to the embellishments which Italian singers give to their most tragic airs, were so well comprehended as to excite applause on all sides.

Such, then, is an intellectual culture, refined and general, fresh in Italy, and which appears there simultaneously with the new art. I would like you to have a nearer appreciation of it, no longer through general statements, but by a complete picture of it; one circumstantial case can alone render clear ideas of it. There is a book of the time which paints the portrait of the accomplished seignior, and of the lady, that is to say, of the two personages which contemporaries could set up as models; around these ideal figures real figures move at various distances;

you have a saloon before your eyes, a saloon of the year 1500, with its guests, its conversations, its decorations, its dances, its music, its wit, its discussions, more decorous, indeed more chivalric and more spiritual than those of Rome or of Florence, but nevertheless faithfully depicted and admirable for presenting in exalted attitudes the purest and noblest group of cultivated and superior characters. To see this it suffices to turn over the pages of "Il Cortegiano," by Count Baldassare de Castiglione.

Count Castiglione had been in the service of Guido d' Ubaldo, duke of Urbino, and next in that of his successor, Francesco Maria della Rovere, and he wrote this book as a souvenir of the conversations which he had heard while he was with the first named seignior. As Duke Guido was infirm and crippled with rheumatism, the little court assembled every evening in his wife's apartments, the Duchess Elizabeth, a person of great virtue and intellect. All sorts of distinguished men from all parts of Italy gathered around her and her most intimate friend, Signora Emilia Pia; Castiglione himself, Bernardo Accolti d' Arezzo, a famous poet,

Bembo, who afterwards became the pope's secretary and a cardinal, Seignior Ottaviano Fregoso, Julian de Medici and many others; Pope Julius II. sometimes stopped there in traveling. The place and the circumstances of the entertainment were worthy of such characters. They assembled in a magnificent palace built by the duke's father, and which, "as many relate," was the finest in Italy. The apartments were splendidly decorated with silver vases, hangings of gold and of silk, antique busts in marble and in bronze, and paintings by Pietro della Francesca and by Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael. It contained a large number of Latin Greek and Hebrew books, collected throughout Europe, and which, out of respect for their contents, were covered with ornaments of gold and silver. The court was one of the most gallant in Italy. There was nothing but festivals, dances, tiltings, tournaments and conversation. "The pleasant converse and the innocent mirth of this mansion," says Castiglione, "made it the veritable house of joy." Ordinarily when the guests had supped and danced they performed a certain species of charade; these

diversions were followed by more intimate conversations, at once grave and gay, in which the Duchess took part. There was no ceremony; all seated themselves as they pleased; each placed himself alongside of a lady and there was no formality or constraint in the intercourse; originality and invention had full play. One evening, at the request of a lady, Bernardo Accolti improvises a pretty sonnet in honor of the Duchess; the Duchess then orders Signora Margarita and Signora Costanza Fregoza to dance; the two ladies join hands, when the favorite musician, Barletta, having tuned his instrument, they dance to the sound of the music, at first in a measured and afterwards with a livelier step. Towards the end of the fourth day, having forgotten themselves in the agreeable pastimes of the night, they notice the appearance of daylight. "They opened the windows on the side of the palace facing the lofty summit of Mount Catari; and they saw to the eastward a beautiful aurora of the color of roses. The stars had all vanished except Venus, the sweet messenger, who occupies the frontier between daylight and darkness; from her there seemed to ema-

nate a soft atmosphere which filled the sky with its bracing freshness and which in the murmuring forests of the neighboring slopes, began to awaken the sweet warblings of the gentle birds."

You can already judge by this extract how agreeable, elegant, and even flowery, the style is; Bembo, one of the interlocutors, is the most polished, the most Ciceronian, the most harmonious of the Italian prose writers. The tone of conversation is similar. Politeness abounds everywhere, compliments to the ladies on their beauty, grace and virtue, and compliments to the seigniors on their valor, intelligence and knowledge. All maintain their self-respect and strive to please each other, which is the great law of good-breeding and the most delicate charm of good society. But politeness does not exclude gayety. We often find their intercourse spiced with little piques, the skirmishings of society, and besides these, with witticisms, drolleries, anecdotes, and gay and humorous story-telling. In the effort which they make to explain true gallantry, a lady states, as a counter-illustration, how an antiquated seignior, who was a fighting man and

rusted by a country life, on paying her a visit enumerated to her the enemies he had slain, and then, suiting the action to the word, he tried to explain to her how the sword was used in cutting and thrusting. She confessed with a smile that she was uneasy, all the while looking at the door and doubting every moment whether he was not disposed to slay her. Frequent touches of this description relieve the dialogue of its seriousness. But seriousness subsists nevertheless. We see that the gentlemen are familiar with Greek and Latin literature, acquainted with history, and versed in philosophy and even in scholastic philosophy. The ladies interpose, scolding a little, and warn them to return to matters of more human interest ; they do not like to see Aristotle and Plato with their surly commentators too often introduced into the conversation, together with theories on heat and cold and on forms and substance. The talkers immediately come back to the charming current of ordinary topics and obtain pardon for their erudition and metaphysics by agreeable and gallant discourse. In other respects, however difficult the subject may

be, and however animated the discussion, they always preserve the elegance and perfection of style. They are scrupulous in the choice of words, they argue on proprieties of expression, they are purists like the fine-talkers of the Hotel Rambouillet, contemporary with Vaugelas and the founders of our classic literature. But the turn of their mind is more poetic as their language is more musical. The Italian language, through its rich cadences and sonorous terminations, imparts beauty and harmony to the commonest things, placing objects which are already beautiful in themselves in a noble and voluptuous framework. Is it necessary to portray the saddening effects of old age? The style, like the Italian sky, sheds golden light on ruins and transforms a lugubrious spectacle into a noble picture. "At that time the sweet flowers of gladness fade away and fall in our hearts like the leaves of the trees in autumn. Instead of serene and limpid thoughts comes sadness, like a dark cloud, accompanied with many calamities, so that not alone the body but the mind becomes weakened, and of all its past pleasures preserves but a fond recollection,

the image of that happy period, of that tender age in which, when the mind dwells on it, heaven, earth and all things seem to us to smile and gladden our eyes, and there blooms in our soul, as if in a beautiful and luxurious garden, the mellow spring of joy. Thus it is that when in the chilly season the sun of our days declines towards its setting and robs us of our pleasures, it would perhaps be to our profit to lose the memory of them and to find the art of oblivion."

The subject of the conversation does not fail to embellish the conversation itself. Each person, at the request of the Duchess, undertakes to describe some of the qualities which form the perfect gentleman, also the accomplished lady; they seek the kind of education which is best adapted to form the soul and the body, not only for the duties of civil life, but again for the enjoyment of ordinary life. Consider all that was then required of a well-educated man, what finesse, what tact, what a variety of acquisitions! We think that we are highly civilized and yet, after three hundred years of education and culture, we might still obtain examples and lessons from them.

"I would have our courtier more than ordinarily instructed in literature, at least in the department of belles-lettres; and that he should know not only the Latin tongue, but again the Greek, on account of the multitude and variety of divine writings in that tongue. . . . That he should be familiar with the poets, and, in like manner, with the orators and historians, and, moreover, exercised in writing in verse and in prose, and especially in our vulgar tongue; for, besides the satisfaction which he will find in it himself, it will never fail him in providing pleasing speech for the ladies, who commonly enjoy these things. I should not be satisfied with our gentleman if he were not, in addition to this, a musician, and if, besides understanding and being in the habit of reading his part on the book, he did not know how to play on divers instruments. . . . For, besides the diversion, and the soothing of care which music affords every one, it often serves to gratify the ladies, whose tender and delicate hearts are easily penetrated by harmony and filled with gentleness." The object is not to be a virtuoso and make a display of a special capacity. Talents are

only formed for society; they are not to be acquired through pedantry, but for agreeable ends; they are not to be exercised for the admiration of others, but to afford pleasure. Hence the necessity of not being ignorant of any of the arts of pleasing.

"There is another thing which I esteem of great importance, and in which our gentlemen must in no respect be backward, and that is the talent for drawing and a knowledge of art." It is one of the adornments of a superior, polished life and, in this respect, the cultivated mind ought to be devoted to it as to every other accomplishment. But in this as in other things there must be no excess. The true talent, the art to which all the rest are subordinated, is tact, "judgment, a certain prudence, a judicious choice, a knowledge of the more or less, of that of the increase or decrease of things, and so arranged as to be accomplished at the favorable or unfavorable moment. For example, even if our gentleman knew that the praise bestowed on him was true he ought not to acknowledge it openly, . . . but rather to modestly repel it, always showing and decidedly taking for his principal profession the

profession of arms, and only adopting the other pursuits as ornaments. If he dances in the presence of many persons, and where there is a large assemblage, it seems to me that he should maintain a certain dignity, tempered nevertheless by an easy and gracious gentleness of movement. If he happens to be a musician, let it be for a pastime, as if reluctantly; . . . and although he may perfectly comprehend what he does, and be therein a master, I wish him to dissimulate the study and fatigue which are necessary in all things in order to know them well; let him have the appearance of not attaching great importance to that sort of thing, while at the same time doing it well and in such a way as to make others highly esteem it." He must not pride himself on the skill which is suited to those who belong to the craft. He must respect himself and make himself respected by others, never through this giving way to his feeling, but, on the contrary, controlling and remaining master of himself. His face must remain calm like that of a Spaniard. He must be clean and neat in his dress; in this respect his taste must be manly and not

feminine; he should prefer a dark color as the sign of a graver and more sedate character. In like manner he must not let himself be carried away by gayety or impetuosity, by anger or egotism. Let him avoid vulgarity, coarse expressions, terms which would bring a blush to a lady's cheek. He must be polite, full of condescension and of consideration for others. He must know how to utter amusing jests and to tell gay stories, but with propriety. The best rule that can be given to him is to regulate his actions so as to please the accomplished lady. Through this ingenious transition the portrait of the gentleman leads to the portrait of the lady, and the delicate touches which served in the first picture become still more delicate in the second.

"As there is no court in the world, however great it may be, which can possess any adornment, splendor, or gayety without ladies, and as there is no gentleman who can be graceful, agreeable or fearless, or perform any brilliant or manly act without the society, affection and favor of ladies, our portrait of the gentleman would remain very im-

perfect if the ladies did not interpose and give it a portion of that grace by which they adorn and make perfect the life of the court."

"I maintain that the lady who lives at court should, above all things, have a certain pleasing affability through which she may be able to graciously entertain all classes of persons of agreeable and sincere discourse, adapted to time and place, and to the quality of the person to whom she speaks. She must have a quiet and modest deportment, a sense of propriety by which she measures all her actions, but besides this a certain mental vivacity by which she may appear estranged from all dullness; and yet she must associate with this a certain air of kindness that will cause her to be esteemed no less prudent, chaste and gentle, than amiable, discreet and sagacious. Hence it is why she has to maintain herself in a certain difficult situation, made up, as it were, of contrary things, and to go to certain limits but without passing beyond them."

"This lady, accordingly, in order to secure a reputation for being honest and virtuous, must not be so prudish and show so much horror of company

and discourse somewhat free as to withdraw when she chances to find herself in it, because it might be easily supposed that she pretended to this austerity for the purpose of concealing something concerning herself which another might know; and moreover blunt ways are always odious. As little should she give utterance to insincere words in order to show herself liberal and amiable, and make use of a certain intemperate and lawless familiarity in such a way as to lead one to think of her that which may not, probably, be true. But when it happens that she is obliged to listen to insinuations, like those alluded to, she must do it with some shame and blush." If she has any tact she can turn the conversation to nobler and more proper subjects. For her education is not of a much lower standard than that of men. Ladies should be equally familiar with literature, music, painting, dancing, and the art of agreeable conversation.

The ladies who take part in the entertainment combine example with precept; their good taste and their wit are displayed with moderation; they applaud Bembo's enthusiasm, and his noble platonic

theories on a universal and pure love. You will find at this time in Italy women who, like Vittoria Colonna, Veronica, Gambara, Costanza d' Amalfi, Tullia d' Aragona and the Duchess of Ferrara, combine superior talents with superior instruction. If, now, you call to mind the portraits of that day in the Louvre, the pale, pensive Venetians in dark costumes, the "Youth" by Francia, so ardent and yet so impassible, the delicate "Joanna of Naples," with the swan's neck, the "Young Man with a Statuette," by Bronzino, all those calm and intelligent countenances, all those rich and grave costumes, you will be able to form some idea of the exquisite finesse, the fertile faculties, the perfect culture of that society which, three centuries before our own, stimulated ideas, loved beauty and practiced urbanity as much and perhaps more than ourselves.

IV.

This leads us to distinguish another characteristic of this civilization and another condition of fine art. Intellectual culture has been equally good at other epochs, without art having attained to the same brilliancy. In our own day, for instance, men having acquired three centuries of experience and discovery over and above the knowledge of the sixteenth century, are better informed and better supplied with ideas than ever, and yet we cannot say that the arts of design in Europe produce nowadays as fine works as in Italy in the time of the Renaissance. Accordingly, to explain the great works of the year 1500, it is not sufficient to note the active intelligence and the finished culture of Raphael's contemporaries; we have to define this species of intelligence and culture, and, after comparing Italy with Europe of the fifteenth century, compare it with the Europe in which we are living to-day.

Let us first commence with the country which, in our time, is certainly the most learned in Europe, Germany. There, especially in northern Germany, everybody knows how to read; young people, again, pass five or six years in the universities, and not only those who are rich and comfortably off, but almost all men belonging to the middle class, including men of the humbler class, at the expense of long suffering and great privations. Science, there, is held in such repute that it sometimes produces affectation, and frequently pedantry. Many of the young men wear spectacles, although they have very good eyes, in order to give themselves a wiser look. The dominant idea in the brain of a German twenty years old is, not to make a figure at a club or a café, as we see in France, but the desire to obtain general ideas of humanity, society, the supernatural, nature, and countless other things, in brief, a complete philosophy. There is no other country in which we find so great a taste for, such constant preoccupation with, such a natural comprehension of, the higher abstract theories. It is the land of metaphysics and systems. This excess of profound

meditation, however, has proved detrimental to the arts of design. The German painters strive hard to express on their canvases, or in their frescoes, humanitarian and religious ideas. They subordinate color and form to thought; their work is symbolic; they depict on their walls courses of philosophy and of history; and if you should go to Munich, you will see that the greatest of them are philosophers astray in art, better qualified to appeal to reason than to the eye, and who ought to make use of a pen rather than of a brush.

Let us pass over to England. There, a man of the middle classes enters a store or a counting-room at a very early age; he works there ten hours a day, works again in his home, and strains all the energies of his mind and body to make enough money. He marries and has a good many children; he works still harder; competition is bitter, the climate is rigid and his necessities become greater. A gentleman, a man of wealth, a nobleman has scarcely more leisure. He is always busy and tied down with absorbing duties. Politics take up the attention of everybody. There are meetings, commit-

tees, clubs, newspapers like the "Times" which daily bring you a whole volume to read, figures, statistics, a ponderous mass of undigested facts to devour and digest, and, in addition to all these, weighty religious affairs, foundations, endowments, incessant preoccupation in improving public and private things, questions of finance, of the balance of power, of conscience and utilitarian or moral arguments—such is their intellectual pasture-land! And therefore painting and the other arts, which appeal to the senses, are relegated to or fall naturally into an inferior position. People have no time to attend to them; they are concerned with graver and more urgent matters; they take art up through fashion and conventionally; they regard it simply as something curious; it furnishes an interesting subject to a few amateurs. It is easy to find patrons to give money for founding museums, for purchasing original drawings, for establishing schools, just as they can be found for other purposes, such as evangelical missions, the support of foundlings and the cure of epileptic patients. These patrons again are the guardians of the public and social welfare; they

believe that music polishes the people and diminishes Sunday inebriation; that the arts of design render workmen good for making cloths and costly jewelry. There is an absence of taste. The feeling for beautiful forms and fine color here is only the fruit of education, an exotic orange cultivated with difficulty in a hot-house, at great expense, and which is generally sour or rancid. The contemporary painters of the country are workmen of an exacting and narrow talent; they will paint a bundle of hay, the fold of a dress, a sprig of bramble with grievous dryness and minuteness; prolonged effort, the constant strain on the physical and moral machine, has, with them, disturbed the balance of sensations and impressions; they have become insensible to the harmony of colors; they cover their canvases with parrot green, make trees of zinc or tin and paint figures with a red of the tint of rare beef; with the exception of a study of physiognomies, and in the science of moral traits, their art is disagreeable; their national exhibitions place before strangers a medley of colors as crude, discordant and violent as a *charivari.*

The answer may be made that these people are Teutonic and English, earnest, Protestant and devoted to erudition and to practical matters, and that in Paris, at least, there is taste and a love of pleasure. It is true that Paris, at this time, is the city of the world where people love most to talk and read, to criticise art, to define gradations of the beautiful, and in which strangers find life the most agreeable, the most varied and the gayest. And yet French art, although it surpasses that of other countries, does not equal, as the French themselves admit, the Italian art of the Renaissance. In any event it is different; its works indicate another spirit and appeal to other minds. It is much more poetic, historic or dramatic than it is picturesque. Inferior in the sentiment of the beauty of the nude form, as well as of what is beautiful in a simple natural existence, it has labored in every sense to represent actual scenes and the exact costume of distant countries and of past times, the tragic emotions of the soul, and the attractive aspects of landscape. It has become the rival of literature; it has plowed the same ground and turned it to the same purposes;

it has made the same appeal to an insatiable curiosity, to an archæological taste, to the craving for powerful emotions and to a morbid and over-refined sensibility. It has transformed itself with a view to address citizens weary with work, confined to a sedentary occupation, overwhelmed with composite ideas, greedy for novelties, documents, and sensations, and likewise for the repose of the fields. Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries a vast change is brought about; the furnishing and derangements of the human brain have become immeasurably complicated. At Paris and throughout France there is an excess of effort owing to two reasons. In the first place life has become costly. A multitude of little conveniences has become indispensable. Carpets, curtains and armchairs are essential, even to a plain man who lives by himself; if he marries he must have, besides these, étageres covered with nicknacks, a handsome, expensive outfit, an endless display of minor objects which, having to be bought with money and not to be got by highway robbery, or obtained by confiscations as in the fifteenth century, must be painfully earned by labor. The greater

portion of our existence is accordingly spent in laborious effort. Moreover, there is the ambition for position in life. As we constitute a great democracy, in which places are put to competition, obtained by perseverance, won through ability, each one of us cherishes a vague hope of becoming a minister of state or a millionaire, which rivalry causes us to redouble our occupations, work and worry.

On the other hand, we number in Paris sixteen hundred thousand inhabitants, which is considerable, and too many. Paris being the city where there are the most chances for succeeding, all those who possess intelligence, ambition and energy, flock to it and elbow each other. The capital of the country thus becomes the universal resort of all superior and professional men; they make common stock of their inventions and researches; they goad each other on through their studies, the theatre, and every species of conversation; they contract a sort of fever. The brain, at Paris, is not in a sound and healthy state; it is over-heated, over-tasked, over-excited, and its efforts, whether in art or in lit-

erature, show the effects of this, sometimes to their advantage but oftener to their detriment.

This is not the case in Italy. We do not find there a million of men crowded together as in a paddock, but numerous cities of fifty, a hundred, or two hundred thousand souls; we do not find there that ambitious throng, that fermentation of curiosity, that concentration of effort, that excess of human activity. A city there was a select number, and not, as with us, a mere mass. The desire for comfort, moreover, was moderate; bodies were still rude and vigorous; people traveled on horseback or lived very well in the open air. The great palaces of that epoch are magnificent, but I doubt if an ordinary modern citizen would like to live in one of them; they are inconvenient and chilly; the seats there which are sculptured with lions' heads and dancing satyrs are artistic masterpieces, but you would find them very hard, while the smallest apartment, the lodging of the concierge of a respectable establishment, is more comfortable than the palaces of Leo X. or Julius II. They did not require all the little conveniences which we cannot nowadays dis-

pense with; they placed their luxury in the possession of the beautiful and not in well-being; they cared for a noble arrangement of columns and figures, and not for the economical acquisition of trinkets, divans and fire-screens. In fine, the ranks being closed and only opened by military success or by princely favor to a few illustrious brigands, five or six superior assassins, or a group of agreeable parasites, there was not seen in society that sharp competition, that bee-hive agitation, that ceaseless and prolonged fury with which each one of us tries to get ahead of his neighbor.

All this is tantamount to saying that the human intellect was better balanced in those days than it is now in Europe, and in this Paris in which we live. It was at least better balanced in relation to art. To make the arts of design flourish demands a soil which is not uncultivated, but, at the same time, which is not over-cultivated. In feudal Europe it was heavy and hard; nowadays it is well pulverized; formerly civilization had not plowed it enough; today it has multiplied its furrows to excess. To have grand, simple forms fixed on canvas by the hand of

a Titian or of a Raphael, requires a natural production of these in the minds of the men around them; and to have them naturally produced in men's minds it is necessary that *images* be not smothered nor mutilated by *ideas.*

Allow me to dwell a moment on this expression, for it is the main point. The province of extreme culture is to efface images more and more to the advantage of ideas. Under the constant pressure of education, conversation, thought and knowledge, the primitive observation of things gets to be disordered, becomes disintegrated and fades out to give place to naked ideas, to terms well classified, to a sort of algebraic notation. The ordinary track of the mind, henceforth, is pure abstraction. If it reverts back to imagery it is with an effort, through a convulsive and morbid shock, through a species of disordered and dangerous hallucination. Such is our mental condition at the present time. We are no longer artists naturally. Our brain is filled with intermixed, graduated, multiplied, intersecting ideas; all civilizations, that of our own land, those of foreign lands, those of the past and those

of the present, have poured into it their inundations and their deposits. For example, pronounce the word *tree* to a modern; he knows that it does not signify a dog, a sheep or a piece of furniture; he lodges this sign in his brain, in a distinct and labeled section of it; with us of the present time we call that comprehension. Our studies and our knowledge have filled our minds with abstract signs; our habits of systematizing lead us regularly and logically from one to the other. We obtain only fragmentary glimpses of colored forms; they do not remain with us; they are vaguely sketched on the inward canvas and immediately vanish. If we succeed in retaining them and fixing them accurately, it is through an effort of the will, after long practice, and a counter-education which does violence to our ordinary education. This extreme effort ends in torment and fever; our greatest colorists, whether literary or plastic, are over-excited or perverted visionaries.* The artists of the Renaissance,

* Heine, Victor Hugo, Shelley, Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Poe, Balzac, Delacroix, Décamps and many others. We have had a good many fine artistic temperaments in our time;

on the contrary, are close observers. This same word *tree*, heard by still healthy and simple minds, conveys to them an instantaneous perception of the complete tree, the round and moving mass of bright foliage with the dark angles which its branches define on the blue of the sky, with its rugged trunk furrowed with big veins, with its feet buried in the soil to withstand wind and storm, so that that which for us is simply notation and a figure, is for them an animated and complete spectacle. They will adhere to it without difficulty and recur to it without effort; they will extract the essential from it; they will not insist on detail with painful and stubborn minuteness; they will enjoy their fine "painted imagery" without convulsively forcing and thrusting it outside of themselves like a palpitating fibre of their own existence. They paint as a horse runs, as a bird flies, spontaneously; colored forms there constitute the natural language of the intellect; if spectators contemplate them in a fresco or on a can-

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almost all have suffered through their education and surroundings. Goethe alone maintained his balance, but it required his great wisdom, orderly life and constant self-discipline.

vas they have already seen them inwardly and they recognize them; they are not strangers to them, artificially brought on the stage through an archæological combination, an effort of the will, a conventionalism of the schools; they are so familiar to them they introduce them into their private life and their public ceremonies; they surround themselves with them and compose living pictures out of them alongside of their painted pictures.

Consider, in effect, costume. What a difference between our trousers, frock-coats and funereal dress-coats, and their ample bedizened gowns, their velvet and silk doublets, their lace collars, their poniards, their Damascene and arabesque swords, their gold embroideries, their diamonds and their feathered caps. All this display of magnificence, which is only nowadays suitable for women, then shone on the attire of gentlemen. Notice, again, the picturesque festivities which took place in all the cities, the state parades, the masquerades and the cavalcades which formed the delight of the people and the princes. For example, Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, visits Florence in 1471; he is accompanied

by a hundred men at arms, five hundred of infantry, fifty lackeys on foot clad in silk and velvet, two thousand gentlemen and domestics in his suite, five hundred dogs and an infinite number of falcons. This excursion cost him two hundred thousand gold ducats. Pietro Riario, Cardinal of San Sisto, expends twenty thousand ducats on a single festival in honor of the Duchess of Ferrara. Traveling afterwards through Italy with a numerous escort and with great splendor, he is taken for the pope, his brother. Lorenzo de Medici contrives a masquerade at Florence which represents the triumph of Camillus. A company of cardinals come there to see it. Lorenzo requests an elephant of the pope who sends him, in place of the elephant, which is engaged elsewhere, two leopards and a panther; the pope regrets that his office hinders him from attending such a pompous ceremony. The Duchess Lucretia Borgia makes her entry into Rome with two hundred magnificently dressed ladies, all on horseback and each one accompanied with a gentleman. The stateliness, the costumes, the lordly and princely display everywhere give an idea of a superb parade

by serious actors. On reading their memoirs and chronicles we see that the Italians construe life as a delightful festivity. Others' cares seem to them an imposition. It concerns them to enjoy, to enjoy nobly and grandly, through the mind, through the senses and especially through the eyes. They have, indeed, nothing else to do. They are unacquainted with our political and humanitarian schemes; they have no parliaments, no meetings, no immense newspapers; their prominent or influential men are not obliged to lead a disputatious crowd; they have no public opinion to consult, no barren discussions to maintain, no statistics to bring forth, no moral or social arguments to string along. Italy is governed by petty tyrants who have seized the government by force, and who keep it the same way as they got it. In their leisure moments they have buildings erected and pictures painted. The rich and the noble, like them, devote themselves to amusements, to obtaining fine mistresses, to possessing statues, pictures and fine clothes, to placing confidants near the prince so that they may be advised if any one is plotting against them with a view to kill them.

Neither do religious ideas trouble them or occupy their time. The friends of Lorenzo de Medici, of Alexander VI. or of Ludovico the Moor think but little of organizing missions, of enterprises for the conversion of pagans, of subscriptions for instructing and "moralizing" the populace. People in those days in Italy were not fervent; they were anything else but fervent. Luther, who visited Italy, his mind filled with scruples and faith, was scandalized and he stated on his return : "The Italians are the most impious of men. They jeer at true religion; Christians like us are ridiculed because we believe in the Scriptures. . . . Here is an expression of which they make use when they go to church, 'Let us conform to the popular errors!'" "If we were obliged," they say again, "to believe God's word fully we should be the most miserable of men, and we should never have a moment of pleasure. We must put on a suitable appearance and not believe everything." The people, in fact, are pagan by temperament, and those who are well brought up are incredulous through their education. "The Italians," says Luther again, with horror, "are either

epicurean or superstitious. The people are more afraid of St. Anthony, or of St. Sebastian, than they are of Christ, on account of the wounds which they contemplate. Hence it is that when it is necessary to warn Italians not to commit a nuisance on a particular spot, an image of St. Anthony with his fiery lance is painted there. They remain thus in the greatest superstition, without knowing the word of God, and believing neither in the resurrection of the flesh, nor in life eternal, and only in dread of temporal suffering." Many of the philosophers are secretly, or almost openly, opposed to revelation and to the immortality of the soul. Christian asceticism and the doctrine of penitence is repugnant to everybody. You will find in their poets, in Ariosto, in Ludovico the Venetian, and in Pulci, lively attacks against the monks and the most open insinuations against dogmas. Pulci, in a comic poem, places a *Hosanna*, an *in principio*, a sacred text from the mass, at the head of each canto. In explanation of the way in which the soul enters the body he compares it to sweetmeats which are enveloped in hot white bread. What becomes of it in

the next world? "Certain people think that they will find *becaficos* there, ortolans with their plumage, good beds, and for this reason that they can tread on the monks' heels. But, my dear fellow, once we descend into the dark valley we shall hear no more hallelujahs sung!"

The moralists and preachers of the day, Bruto and Savonarola for example, thunder against this sensuality and atheism with all their might. Savonarola told the Florentines that he was going to engage in conversions for three or four years: "Your life is that of swine, you pass it in bed, in idle gossip, in the streets, in orgies and in debauchery." Subtract from this what must always be taken off when a preacher or a moralist speaks loud in order to be heard; but whatever you take off there is plenty left. We see in the biographies of the nobles of this epoch, in the cynical or refined pleasures of the Dukes of Ferrara and Milan, in the dainty epicureanism or in the open license of the Medicis at Florence, how far the quest for any description of pleasure was carried. These Medicis were bankers who, through a little force or a good deal of address,

had become the first magistrates and the veritable sovereigns of the city. They entertained around them poets, painters, sculptors and scholars. They gave representations in their palaces of mythological hunting and amatory scenes. In the direction of painting they prized the nudities of Dello and Pollaiolo; they sharpened the great and noble sentiment of paganism with a point of voluptuous sensuality. Hence it is they were very tolerant of the pranks of their artists. You know the story of Fra Filippo Lippi who carried off a nun; on her parents complaining to the Medicis they merely laugh. The same Fra Filippo, when working in their palace, was so fond of his mistresses that, on being shut up to make him finish some subject, he made a rope of his bed clothes to enable him to escape through the window. Finally, Cosmo ordered "the door to be left open, men of genius being celestial essences and not beasts of burden, and not to be either imprisoned or constrained." At Rome it was worse. I will not narrate Alexander VI.'s amusements to you; they are to be perused in the journal of his chaplain Burchard; the Latin tongue can alone expose his im

moralities and Bacchanalian excesses. As for Leo X., he is a man of taste, fond of elegant latinity and clever epigrams; but for all that he does not abstain from illicit pleasure and open animal enjoyment. Around him, Bembo, Molza, Aretino, Baraballo and Querno, numbers of poets, musicians and parasites, lead not very edifying lives, while their verses, generally, are more than free. Cardinal Bibiena has a comedy played before him, *la Calandra*, which no theatre of the present day would dare have represented. He amuses himself with serving his guests with dishes in the shape of monkeys and crows. His clown is a mendicant monk named Mariano, and a huge eater, "who swallows a boiled or roasted pigeon at one mouthful, and who can take down forty eggs and twenty chickens." He delighted in coarse pastimes and in fantastic and burlesque creations; the spirit and impulse of the animal abounded in him as in others; booted and spurred, he is a passionate hunter of stag and boar among the savage hills of Civita-Vecchia, while the festivals to which he treats himself are no more ecclesiastic than his habits. A secretary of the Duke of Ferrara, an eye-

witness, thus describes one of his days. Judge by the contrast between his pleasures and ours how much the law of propriety has increased, how much free and powerful natural instincts have diminished, to what extent an active imagination has become subject to pure reason and what a gulf there is between us and those half-pagan, completely sensual but eminently picturesque times when the life of the spirit did not undermine the life of the flesh.

"I was at the play on Sunday evening;* Monseigneur de Rangoni† introduced me into one of Cibo's‡ anterooms where the Pope was with his young and right reverend cardinals. His Holiness was walking about the room, allowing those to enter it whose quality suited him, and as soon as the company reached the number he had fixed upon they betook themselves to the spot assigned for the play; our Holy Father stood by the door, and, with-

* First published in the Gazette des Beaux Arts by the Marquis Joseph Campori.

† Hercules Rangoni, Cardinal.

‡ Cardinal Innocent, son of Franceschetto Cibo and of Magdalen Medicis, sister of Leo X.

out any confusion, he allowed admission by giving his benediction to whomsoever he pleased. Once admitted into the room we found the stage on one side and, on the other, a set of steps on which was placed the pontiff's chair who, after the laymen had entered, seated himself in his chair, raised five or six steps above the floor, followed by the right reverend cardinals and the ambassadors who took their positions around the chair according to their rank; and once the crowd was received, which might be about two thousand, they sounded the fifes and lowered the curtain on which there was painted Brother Mariano* with several devils capering about him on each side of the curtain, in the midst of which there was a scroll which stated: 'Behold the fancies of Brother Mariano!' The music commenced and the Pope, through his spectacles, admired the scene which was very beautiful, being

* Brother Mariano Fetti, a lay Dominican who succeeded Bramante, the predecessor of Sebastiano in the department of the *Piombo*, one of the gayest and most agreeable spirits of the court of Leo X., conjointly with Baraballo, Querno and their fellows and at once patron and friend of artists.

executed by the hand of Raphael; it was really a fine prospect of highly-lauded issues and perspectives. His Holiness likewise admired the sky which was marvelously represented; the candelabras were formed with letters and each letter supported five torches inscribed with: 'Leo X., Pont. Maximus.' The Nuncio appeared on the stage and recited an argument. He ridiculed the title of the play, the *Suppositi*, to such an extent that the Pope, with the spectators, laughed heartily, and judging by what I heard, the French were somewhat scandalized by the subject of the *Suppositi*. The comedy was presented and well played, and at each act there was an interlude of music with fifes, bagpipes, two cornets, viols, lutes, and the small organ with such varied tones, generously presented to the Pope by the most illustrious Monseigneur of blessed memory; there was at the same time a flute and a voice which gave great pleasure; there was also a concert of voices which, in my opinion, did not succeed as well as the other musical performances. The last interlude was the *Mauresque*, which represented the Gorgon fable very well, but not with that perfec-

tion in which I have seen it represented in your lordship's palace; thus the festival ended. The audience began to retire, and in such haste, and with such crowding that, it being my fate to be pushed over a small bench, I came very near having my leg broken. Bondelmonte received a violent shock from a Spaniard and whilst beginning to strike the latter with his fists, the way was made much easier for me to escape; it is certain that my leg was in great danger; I found, besides, compensation for this mishap in a grand benediction, and in the gracious look with which the Holy Father honored me."

"On the day preceding this entertainment there was a race of horses in which was seen a number of jennets, with Monseigneur Corner for master, dressed diversely *à la Mauresque*; and afterwards another wholly in the Spanish style, clad in Alexandrine satin with a lining of changeable silk, capuchin and doublet, with Serapica and several *valets de chambre* on service, at the head of it. This race was composed of twenty horses; the Pope had presented each cavalier with forty-five ducats; and,

indeed, the livery was beautiful, with the servants and trumpeters dressed in the same silken hues. Having reached the ground they began to run two and two towards the palace gate, where the Pope stood at the windows, and when both troops had finished this race the Serapica company withdrew to the other side of the square and the Cornera towards St. Peter's; the Serapica, taking cane lances, approached to attack the Cornera who also had theirs; the Serapica cast their lances at the Cornera who did the same thing against their rivals, and both attacked and rushed at each other, which was very beautiful to see and without danger. Many were the fine horses and mares among them. The following day there were bull-fights; I was with Seignior Marc Antonio, as I have mentioned; three men were killed and five horses were wounded; two are dead, and among others a Serapica, a very fine jennet, which threw him to the ground and brought him in great danger, for the bull was upon him and if the brute had not been goaded with a pike it would not have relaxed its hold and would have killed him. The Pope, it is stated, exclaimed 'Poor Serapica!'

and bewailed him a good deal. I am told that, in the evening, a certain comedy by a monk was played, ... and as it did not give great satisfaction, the Pope, instead of ordering *La Mauresque* to be danced, had the monk put in a blanket and tossed in such a way in the air as to make him come down on his belly on the stage-floor, and after that his garters were cut and he was made to take to his heels; the good monk, however, showed his teeth and bit three or four of the grooms. He was, at last, forced to mount a horse, and they struck him so many blows on his back with their hands that, I am told, it was necessary to make several cuppings on the lower parts; he is now in bed and not at all well. It is said that the Pope did this to set an example to other monks, that they might not take it into their heads to make further exhibitions of their mummeries. This *Mauresque* excited a good deal of laughter. To-day the turn came for the ring race before the palace gate, the Pope being there and looking on from his windows; the prizes were already inscribed on vases. Next to this came the buffalo race. It was amusing to see these ugly

brutes running, now heaving ahead and now falling backward, in order that they should arrive at the goal, and before reaching it, they required much time, for they take one step ahead and four backward, so that it is not easy to reach the goal. The last one to get there was the one that was ahead and he accordingly bore off the prize; they numbered ten and, in faith, it was a great scramble. I withdrew afterwards to Bembo's residence; I called on His Holiness where I met the Bishop of Bayeux. Nothing was talked about but masks and matters of gaiety.

"From Rome, this day, 8 March MDXVIII, at four o'clock in the night.

"Of your illustrious Seigneurie

"The Servant, ALPHONSE PAULUZO."

The above are carnival amusements at the court which apparently ought to be the soberest and most decorous in Italy. We also encounter here races of naked men as in the ancient Greek games, and we know of obscenities such as were given in the amphitheatres of the Roman empire. With such a vigorous imagination turned towards phys-

ical pleasures, with a civilization which sets up pleasure as the end of human life, with such a complete emancipation from political cares, from industrial complications and from the moral aims which now fix minds on positive interests and on abstract ideas, it is not surprising that a race richly endowed for the arts, and highly cultivated, should have loved, created and perfected the art which represents to us outward forms. The Renaissance is a unique moment, intermediate between the middle ages and modern times, between a lack of culture and over-culture, between the reign of crude instincts and the reign of ripe ideas. Man ceases then to be a gross, warlike, carnivorous animal, only capable of exercising his limbs; he has not yet become a devotee of the midnight lamp or of the drawing-room, only capable of exercising his tongue and his understanding. He partakes of both natures. He has long and profound reveries like the savage; he is moved by keen, delicate curiosity like the civilized man. Like the former he thinks through images; like the latter he discovers laws. Like the former he seeks sensuous pleasure; like the

latter he steps beyond vulgar pleasure. His appetites have become refined. He is interested in the externals of things, but he requires to have them perfect; while the beautiful forms which he contemplates in the works of his great artists do no more than set free the vague figures with which his brain is peopled, and satisfy the mute instincts with which his heart is moulded.

V.

It now remains to be shown why this great, picturesque talent selected the human form for its principal subject; by what experiences, habits and passions men were prepared to be interested in muscles; why, in this great domain of art their eyes preferred to turn towards healthy, powerful, energetic figures which subsequent ages have only been able to find or to copy traditionally.

For this purpose, after having laid before you the state of minds, I shall try to show you the kind of characters. By the state of minds is understood the kind, number and quality of ideas which are found in a human brain, and of which they are, in some sort, the furniture. But the furniture of a brain, like that of a palace, is changed without much trouble. Without touching the palace itself we may place in it other hangings, buffets, bronzes

and carpets; in a similar way, without touching the internal structure of a soul, we can place in it other ideas; a change of condition or of education is sufficient for that purpose; according as man is ignorant or learned, plebeian or noble, his ideas are different. There is within him, then, something more important than ideas, which is his structure itself; I mean his character, in other words, his natural instincts, his inborn passions, the greatness of his sensibility, the degree of his energy, in short the force and direction of his inner activity. To enable you to see this profound structure of the Italian soul, I am going to show you the circumstances, habits, and necessities that have produced it; you will comprehend it better through its history than by a definition of it.

The first trait, then, which is observed in Italy is the want of a long and firmly-established peace, impartial justice, and a watchful police like that to which we are accustomed in our country. We have some difficulty in picturing to ourselves that excess of anxiety, of disorder and of violence. We have been too long in an opposite condition. We have

so many gendarmes and policemen that we are inclined to find them more troublesome than useful. With us if fifteen persons gather together in the street to look at a dog with a broken leg, a man with a moustache approaches and says, "Move on, gentlemen, crowds are forbidden." This seems to us unreasonable; we denounce it, forgetting to remark that these very men with moustaches afford both to the rich and to the weak the assurance of being able to walk lonely streets at midnight safe and unarmed. Let us suppose these dispensed with, and a society imagined in which a police force is powerless or disregarded. We find countries of this sort in Australia, or in America, as for example, in the placers where the gold-hunters flock in crowds and live haphazard without having yet formed a government. In these regions if one fears that he may receive either a blow or an insult he at once discharges his revolver at the offending party. The latter fires back, and sometimes the neighbors interfere. One is constantly obliged there, to defend his life or his property; danger, brutal and sudden, hems man in on all sides.

Such was nearly the state of things in Italy about the year 1500; there was no knowledge then of anything like this great government which, perfected with us for four hundred years past, considers that its simplest duty is to preserve to each person, not only his property and his life, but again his repose and his security. The princes of Italy were petty tyrants who had generally usurped power through assassinations or poisonings, or, at least, through violence and treachery. Naturally their sole concern was to retain this power. As to the security of citizens, they made but little provision for it. Individuals had to defend themselves and, moreover, to do themselves justice; if a man had a too refractory debtor, if he encountered an impertinent fellow in the street, if he considered this or that person as dangerous or inimical to him, he found it quite natural to get rid of him as soon as possible. Instances abound; you have only to look through the memoirs of the time to see how deeply rooted this custom of self-appeal was and this habit of personal violence.

"On the 20th September," says Stefano d' Infes-

sura, "there was a great tumult in the city of Rome, and all the tradesmen closed their shops. Those who were in the fields or in their vineyards, went home in great haste and all, whether citizens or strangers, took up arms because it was stated as a certain thing that Pope Innocent III. was dead."

The feeble bond which held society together broke and the people returned to a savage state; each one took advantage of the hour to rid himself of his enemies. It must be noticed that although assaults in ordinary times were a little less frequent they were not the less sanguinary. The private feuds of the Colonna and Orsini families extended all around Rome; these nobles kept armed men and summoned their peasants; each band devastated the lands of the enemy; if a truce was effected it was soon broken and each chief, buckling on his *giacco*, sent word to the Pope that his adversary was the aggressor.

"Even in the city a good many murders took place day and night, and scarcely a day passed that some one was not slain. . . . On the third of September a certain Salvador attacked his enemy,

Seignior Beneaccaduto, with whom he was nevertheless at peace under a bond of five hundred ducats."

This signifies that each had made a deposit of five hundred ducats which was to be lost by the first one that broke the truce. A guarantee, like this, of a sworn pledge was an habitual thing; there was no other way of maintaining a slight degree of public tranquillity. We find the following note in the private account book of Benvenuto Cellini: "I make note that, this day, October 26, 1556, I, Benvenuto Cellini, am released from prison and that I have made a truce with my enemy for one year. Each of us has given security in three hundred crowns." But a guarantee of money is feeble against violence of temperament and the ferocity of manners and customs. Hence it is that Salvador could not refrain from attacking Beneaccaduto; "He pierced him twice with his sword, and wounded him mortally, so that he died."

The magistrates, too openly defied, now interfere, while the people take the matter up somewhat as, in our day, in San Francisco during the sway of Lynch law. In San Francisco when assassinations became

too frequent, business men and respectable persons, the leading men of the city, accompanied by all well-disposed persons, went to the prison, seized the culprits and hung them forthwith. In the same way "on the fourth day, the Pope sent his vice-chamberlain with the conservators and the entire people to destroy Salvador's house. They destroyed it, and on the same fourth day of September, Jerome, brother of the said Salvador, was hung," probably because they could not lay hands on Salvador himself. In these tumultuous and popular executions every one is responsible for his relations.

There are fifty similar examples; the men of this time are accustomed to affrays, and not only men of the lower class but men who, belonging to the upper ranks or of high culture, ought, apparently, to have exercised some self-control. Guiccardini relates that, one day, Trivulcio, governor of the Milan territory for the King of France, killed with his own hand some butchers in the market "who, with the usual insolence of people of that class, made opposition to the levying of certain taxes from which they had not been exempted." You are accustomed now-

adays to see artists as men of society, peaceable citizens, and well qualified for suitably wearing a dress-coat and white cravat in the evening. In Cellini's memoirs you find a goldsmith named Piloto who is a "worthy man," but yet a captain of brigands. In another place we find Raphael's pupils determining to kill Rosso because Rosso, who is given to scandal, had maligned Raphael; and Rosso thinks it most prudent to leave Rome; after threats of this kind a journey becomes urgent. The slightest excuse suffices them for killing a man. Cellini narrates again that Vasari was in the habit of wearing his nails very long, and one night, sleeping with his apprentice Manno, "he scratched his leg with his hands thinking that he was scratching himself, whereupon Manno absolutely wanted to murder Vasari." The motive was a slight one. But at this time man is so fierce, so accustomed to blows, the blood rushes at once to his head and he strikes blindly. A bull first strikes with his horns; he first strikes with a dagger.

The spectacles, accordingly, which are daily witnessed in Rome, or in its environs, are atrocious.

Punishments seem to be those of an oriental monarchy. Enumerate, if you can, the murders committed by that handsome and clever Cæsar Borgia, son of the Pope, and Duke of Valentinois, whose portrait you may see at Rome in the Borghese gallery. He is a man of taste, an able politician, and fond of fêtes and refined conversation; his fine form is fitted with a doublet of black velvet; he has perfect hands and the calm expression of a grand seignior. But he knows how to ensure respect, and he manages his own affairs, with his own hands, either with the sword or the dagger.

"On the second Sunday," says Burchard, the Pope's chamberlain, "a man with a mask on, in the Borgo, uttered some offensive words against the Duke of Valentinois. The Duke, hearing of it, had him arrested; they cut off his hand and the fore part of his tongue, which was attached to the little finger of the severed hand," undoubtedly to set an example. Another time, as with the *chauffeurs* of 1789, "the servants of the same Duke suspended two old men and eight old women by the arms, after having kindled a fire under their feet to make them confess

where money was concealed, while they, not knowing, or not wishing to reveal where it was, died under the said torture."

Another day, the Duke causes "*gladiandi*" to be led into the prison court and he himself, dressed in his finest suit, and in the presence of a numerous and select audience, pierces them with arrows. "He also killed Perotto, who was the Pope's favorite," under the Pope's own robe, in such a way that the blood spurted in the Pope's face. This family is given to cutting each other's throats. He had already had his brother-in-law attacked with a sword, the Pope taking care of the wounded man; but the Duke exclaimed: "'What is not done at dinner can be done at supper.' And one day, the seventeenth of August, he entered his room, as the young man was already up, and ordered his wife and sister to leave it; then having called in three assassins he had the said young man strangled." Besides this, he killed his own brother, the Duc di Gandia, and had his body cast in the Tiber. After various enquiries they discovered a fisherman who was on the river bank at the time of the occurrence. And

as they asked him why he had said nothing about it to the governor of the city, he replied, "that he did not think it worth while, for on different nights in his lifetime he had seen more than a hundred bodies thrown in at the same spot without anybody concerning themselves about it."

The Borgias, that privileged family, seem undoubtedly to have had a special taste and talent for poisonings and assassinations; but you will find, in the small Italian states, numerous personages, princes and princesses, worthy of having been their contemporaries. The Prince of Faenza had given his wife cause for jealousy; she conceals four assassins under his bed and lets them loose at him when he enters to go to rest; but he makes vigorous resistance and she then springs out of bed, seizes a dagger attached to the bed-post, and stabs him herself in the back. She is excommunicated for this act and her father entreats Lorenzo de Medici, who is in great credit with the Pope, to intercede for her and have the ecclesiastical censure removed, alleging among other motives that she has "the intention of providing herself with another husband." At

Milan, Duke Galeazzo is assassinated by three young men in the habit of reading Plutarch; one of them was killed in the affray and his body was cast to the hogs; the others declared, before being quartered, that they had struck the blow because the Duke "not only debauched women but, again, caused their deaths by refined torments." At Rome, Pope Leo X. just escaped being killed by his cardinals; his surgeon, in their pay, was to poison him when dressing a fistula; cardinal Petrucci, the principal instigator of the crime, was put to death. If now, we consider the house of Malatesta at Rimini, or the house of Este at Ferrara, we find with them similar hereditary habits of poisoning and assassination. If, at length, you contemplate a city which seems to be somewhat better governed, Florence, the chief of which, a Medici, is an intelligent, liberal, honest man, you will find acts committed there as savage as any of those which you have just heard described. For example, the Pazzi, irritated at seeing power wholly in the hands of the Medicis, conspired with the archbishop of Pisa to assassinate both of the Medicis, Julian and Lorenzo; Pope Sixtus IV. was

an accomplice. The time selected for this act was the hour of mass in the church of Santa Reparata, the signal being the elevation of the Host. One of the conspirators, Bandini, stabbed Julian de Medici; then Francesco dei Pazzi, maddened with rage, attacked the corpse so furiously as to wound himself in the thigh, afterwards killing one of the friends of the Medici house. Lorenzo was wounded, but he was brave; he had time to draw his sword and to roll his cloak around his arm for a shield while his friends gathered around him and protected him with their swords or their bodies, well enough to enable him to retreat into the sacristie. Meanwhile the other conspirators, numbering thirty and with the archbishop at their head, had surprised the town-hall with a view to possess themselves of the seat of government. But the governor on taking command of this had arranged the gates in such a way that when they were once closed they could not be opened on the inside. The conspirators, accordingly, were taken as in a mousetrap. The people rushed to arms and assembled on all sides. They seized the archbishop and hung him in his

pontifical robes alongside of Francesco dei Pazzi, the first instigator of the conspiracy, while the prelate in his rage, dying and hanging as he was, grappled the body of his accomplice and ravenously bit him. "About twenty persons of the Pazzi family were cut to pieces at the same time, as well as twenty more of the archbishop's house, while sixty persons were hung at the palace windows." A painter, whose history I have related to you, Andrea da Castagno, another assassin who slew his friend for stealing his discovery of painting in oil, was commissioned to paint this great hanging, which, later, secured to him the name of *Andrea of the Hung.*

I should never stop if I attempted to relate to you the histories of the time, which are full of similar characteristics. Here is one, however, which I must still select because the personage will appear again on the stage and because the narrator is Machiavelli. "Oliveretto da Fermo, being left young and an orphan, was brought up by one of his maternal uncles named Giovanni Fogliani." He then learns the profession of arms under his brothers. "As he was

naturally intelligent, and cheerful and vigorous both in body and in feeling, he in a short time became one of the best men of his troop. But, concluding that it was a disgraceful thing to remain lost in a crowd, he determined, with the assistance of some of the citizens of Fermo, to get possession of the city, and he wrote to his uncle to say that, having remained absent from his country several years, he wished to return to see it himself, also the city, and to obtain a glimpse of his patrimony. He added that, if he took so much trouble it was only to acquire honor; and, in order that his fellow citizens might satisfy themselves that he had not passed his time in a fruitless way, he wished to come accompanied by a hundred horsemen, his friends and followers, begging him to give orders to the people of Fermo to welcome him honorably, which would not alone be creditable to him, Oliveretto, but again to himself, Giovanni, who had brought up Oliveretto from infancy. Giovanni omitted none of the good offices requested of him; he caused him to be honorably received by the people of Fermo, and he lodged him in his own house. . . . .

Oliveretto, having passed several days in arranging all that was necessary for his nefarious crime, gave a very formal banquet to which he invited Giovanni and all the first citizens of Fermo. Towards the end of it . . . . having purposely led the conversation to serious subjects, on the greatness of Pope Alexander, and of his son and their enterprises, he suddenly arose, saying that for such topics they must have a more retired place. He withdrew into a room and Giovanni and the others followed him. Scarcely had they seated themselves, when soldiers issued from the secret recesses of the chamber, who killed Giovanni and all the rest. After the homicide Oliveretto mounted his horse, rode through the town, and besieged the chief magistrate in the town-hall, so that, through fear the inhabitants were constrained to obey him and to establish a government and place him at the head of it. He put to death all those who were discontented and who might annoy him . . . . and in one year he became formidable to all his neighbors."

Enterprises of this sort are frequent. The life of Cæsar Borgia is full of them, while the submission

of the Romagna to the Holy See is only one long train of treasons and assassinations. Such is the veritable feudal state, that in which every man, left to himself, attacks another or defends himself, pushing his ambition, villainy or vengeance to the utmost without fearing the intervention of the government or the repression of the law.

But that which marks an enormous difference between Italy of the fifteenth century and Europe of the middle ages is the great cultivation of the Italians at that period. You have but just now seen the repeated proofs of this high culture. Through an extraordinary contrast, whilst manners have become elegant and tastes delicate, the hearts and characters of men have remained ferocious. These people who are learned, critical, fine talkers, polished, and men of society, are at the same time freebooters, assassins and murderers. Their actions are those of savages and their arguments those of civilized people; they may be called intelligent wolves. Suppose, now, that a wolf should form judgments of his species; he would probably found his code on murder. This is what happened in Italy;

the philosophers erected the customs of which they were witnesses into a theory, and ended by believing, or saying, that if you wish to subsist or to exist in this world you must act like a scoundrel. The most profound of these theorists was Machiavelli, a great man, and indeed an honest man, a patriot, a superior genius, who wrote a work called "The Prince" to justify or, at least, to sanction treachery and assassination. Or rather he neither justifies nor sanctions; he passes beyond indignation and puts conscience to one side; he analyzes and explains as a scientist and connoisseur of men; he provides documents and comments on them; he sends plain instructive reports to the magistrates of Florence, written in a style as cool as the narrative of a skillful surgical operation.

"Description of the mode employed by the Duke of Valentinois to kill Vitellozo Vitelli, Oliveretto da Fermo, Seignior Pagolo and Duke Gravina Orsini.

"Magnificent Seigniors, as your lordships have not received all my letters in which a large portion of the affair of Sinigaglia is comprised, it seemed to me advisable to write it out in detail, and I think

that this will prove agreeable to you on account of the spirit of the matter which is rare and memorable in every point of view."

The Duke had been worsted by these seigniors and he found himself weak against them. He made peace with them, promised them a good deal, gave them something, lavished all sorts of fine speeches on them, became their ally and finally got them to propose a conference on a matter of mutual interest. They were afraid, and hesitated a long time. But his protestations were so winning, he handled their hopes and desires so adroitly, he pretended to be so gentle and loyal, that they came, with troops indeed, and let themselves be conducted, under the semblance of a sumptuous hospitality, to a palace which the Duke occupied at Sinigaglia. They entered it on horseback, and the Duke received them courteously; but, "all having dismounted at the Duke's lodging, and having entered along with him into a secret chamber, they were made his prisoners.

"The Duke immediately mounted his horse and ordered the followers of Oliveretto and Orsini to be

plundered. But the Duke's soldiers, not content with plundering Oliveretto's followers, began to sack Sinigaglia, and if the Duke had not repressed their insolence by slaying a good many of them, they would have sacked it completely."

The small as well as the great acted like brigands; force was the universal rule.

"When night came, and the tumult was suppressed, the Duke thought it advisable to have Vitellozo and Oliveretto killed, and, having them led to a certain spot he caused them to be strangled. Vitellozo implored them to entreat the Pope to give him full absolution for his sins. Oliveretto wept, casting on Vitellozo the blame of all that had been done to the Duke. Pagolo and the Duke of Gravini were allowed to live until the Duke had heard that the Pope had secured Cardinal Orsino, Archbishop of Florence, and Messire Jacopo de Santa-Croce. On receiving the news, the 18th January, at the castle of La Pieve, they were strangled in the same manner."

This is simple narrative; but, not content with stating facts, Machiavelli elsewhere deduces infer-

ences. He writes a book, half real, half imaginary, in the style of Xenophon's Cyrus, the *Life* of Castruccio Castracani, whom he presents to the Italians as the type of an accomplished prince. This Castruccio Castracani, a foundling, had made himself sovereign of Lucca and Pisa two hundred years before, and had become sufficiently powerful to threaten Florence. He had performed "a good many acts which in their wisdom and integrity might be regarded as excellent examples," and "leaving of himself a happy memory, his friends having regretted him more than any other prince of his day." Here is one of the admirable acts of this hero, so beloved and worthy of eternal praise.

The Poggio family having rebelled at Lucca against him, Stefano Poggio, "an old and peaceable man," arrested the insurgents and promised to intercede for them. "They then laid down their arms, as unwisely as they had taken them up." Castruccio returns. "Stefano, thinking that Castruccio was under obligations to him, went to see him and asked nothing in his own behalf, not deeming it necessary, but in behalf of others of his house, urging him to

excuse much on account of youth, and much on account of old friendship and the obligations that he, Castruccio, owed to their family. To which Castruccio graciously replied, telling him to be of good cheer, evincing more gratification in finding the disturbance arrested than resentment in learning that it had broken out. He encouraged Stefano to induce them all to come to him, telling him that he gave thanks to God for having an opportunity to show his clemency and generosity. They all came, accordingly, on faith in the word of Stefano and of Castruccio, and all of them together, with Stefano, were made prisoners and put to death."

Machiavelli's other hero is that Cæsar Borgia, the greatest assassin and most complete traitor of the century, an accomplished man of his kind, who always looks upon peace the same as the Hurons and Iroquois look upon war, that is to say, as a condition in which dissimulation, feint, perfidy and ambuscade are a right, a duty and an achievement. He practiced these on everybody, even on his own family, and even on those faithful to him. One day, wishing to silence the rumors spread about concern-

ing his cruelty, he had his governor of the Romagna seized, Remiro d'Orco, who had rendered him important services, and to whom he owed the tranquillity of the whole country. And the following day the citizens saw, with satisfaction and with terror, Remiro d'Orco lying on the public square in two pieces with a bloody knife alongside of him. The Duke ordered it to be proclaimed that he had had him punished for his too great severity, thus creating for himself the reputation of a just and good ruler and a protector of the people. Machiavelli, accordingly, comes to such a conclusion as this:

"Everybody knows how laudable it is for a prince to keep his word and live with integrity and not with craftiness. We nevertheless see by experience in our day that those among princes have accomplished great things who have made little account of their faith and have known how, through craftiness, to turn men's brains and have at last destroyed those who built upon their loyalty. . . . . A wise seignior cannot or ought not to keep his word when that is injurious to him, and when the motives that induced him to give it have disappeared. Besides,

never did a prince lack legitimate reasons for giving a color to his bad faith. It is necessary, however, to give a good coloring to them and to be a competent cheat and dissimulator. . . . . And men are so simple, and so readily obey present necessity that he who deceives always finds some one who lets himself be deceived."

It is evident that such customs and such maxims have an important bearing on characters. In the first place the entire absence of justice and of a police, that license for crime and assassination, that obligation to avenge oneself without pity and to be feared in order to exist, that incessant appeal to force, hardens the soul; man becomes addicted to sudden and extreme resolutions; he is constrained to know how to kill or to cause death at any moment. Again, as he lives in constant and extreme danger he is absorbed with great anxieties and tragic passions; he is not diverted by nice discriminations of sentiment; he is not a calm and curious critic. The emotions which stir him are grand and simple. It is not some detail of his observation or a portion of his fortune which is at stake, but his whole life

and that of those who belong to him. He can fall from the highest to the lowest place, and, like Remiro, Poggio, Gravina, and Oliveretto, open his eyes under the knife or the cord of the executioner. Life is tempestuous and the will strained to the utmost. The spirit is stronger and it has full play.

I would like to collect all these peculiarities, and no longer present you with an abstraction, but a person in action. There is one whose memoirs we have, written with his own hand, in a very simple style, so much the more instructive, and which will place before your eyes better than any other book the ways in which contemporaries felt, thought and acted. Benvenuto Cellini may be considered as an abridgment in high relief of the violent passions, the perilous lives, the impulsive and powerful geniuses, the fertile and dangerous faculties which produced the Renaissance in Italy and which, in devastating society, produced the arts.

The first thing that strikes us in him is the power of inward force, the energetic and courageous character, the vigorous initiative, the habit of sudden resolve and of extreme measures, the great

capacity of action and of suffering, in short, the indomitable force of an intact temperament. Such was the splendid animal, at once militant and undaunted, which the harsh customs of the middle ages had nourished and which, with us, are softened by peaceful times and a police of long-standing. He was sixteen years of age, and his brother Giovanni was fourteen. One day, Giovanni, having been insulted by another young man, challenged him to fight. They betook themselves to the city gate and fought with swords. Giovanni disarmed his antagonist, wounded him, and was continuing the battle when some of the relations of the wounded man arrived and began to stone him and attack him with swords, so effectively that he too was wounded and fell to the ground. Cellini appeared on the stage, picked up a sword and fell upon the assailants, avoiding the stones as he best could, and never leaving his brother a step; he was about to be overcome when, a few soldiers passing by and admiring his courage, they took part in the fray and aided in his deliverance. He then lifted his brother on his shoulders and carried him home.

You may find a hundred instances of the like energy. It is a miracle that he was not killed twenty times over. He always has a sword, or an arquebus, or a dagger in his hand, in the streets, on the highways, against personal enemies, disbanded soldiers, brigands, and all sorts of rivals; he is on the defensive and, more frequently, he is the attacking party. The most surprising of these traits is his escape from the Castle of St. Angelo, where he was imprisoned after a murder. He descends from this enormous height by means of ropes which he made out of his bed clothes, encountering a sentinel whom he frightened with his terribly resolute air and who pretended not to see him, using a pole to get across the second inclosure and tying his last rope and gliding down. But his rope was too short; he fell and broke his leg below the knee; he then bound up the leg and, bleeding all the while, crawls to the city gate; it is shut and he crawls under it after digging the ground away with his poniard; dogs assail him, one of which he disembowels and then, coming across a porter he has himself carried to the house of an ambassador who was one of his

friends. He thinks he is safe, as he has the Pope's safeguard. But he is suddenly again arrested and put into a foul dungeon, into which light comes only two hours in the day. The executioner comes and, moved with pity, spares him that day. After this they are content to keep him in captivity; the walls sweat with moisture, his straw rots, his wounds do not heal. Several months pass in this way; his strong constitution resists everything. A body and a soul thus fashioned seem to be of porphyry or of granite, whilst ours are of clay or of plaster.

But the resources of his nature are as great in him as the vigor of his constitution. Nothing is more pliant and copious than these fresh and healthy natures. He found an example in his own family. His father was an architect, a good draughtsman, an impassioned musician, playing on the viol and singing only to please himself; he made admirable wooden organs, harpsichords, viols, lutes and harps; he worked in ivory, he was skillful in the construction of machines, he played on the flute amongst the fifers of the seigniory, he knew a

little Latin and wrote verse. The men of this epoch are universal. Without mentioning Leonardo da Vinci, Pic de la Mirandola, Lorenzo de Medici, Leo Batista Alberti and those of superior genius, we see business men and traders, monks and artisans placing themselves, by their tastes and habits, on a level with the occupations and pleasures which nowadays seem the peculiar province of the most cultivated men and of the most delicate organization. Cellini was of this number. He had got to be an excellent flute and cornet player in spite of himself, disliking these exercises and only devoting himself to them to please his father. Besides this he, very early, became an admirable draughtsman, goldsmith, niello-worker, enameler, sculptor and founder. He, at the same time, proved himself an engineer and armorer, a machinist, a builder of fortifications, loading, manœuvring and aiming cannon better than those of the profession. At the siege of Rome by the Constable Bourbon he makes great havoc with his bombs in the besieging army. A capital shot with the arquebus, he kills the Constable with his own hand; he manufactures his own

gun and powder and hits a bird with a ball at two hundred paces. His genius was so inventive that he discovered special processes in all arts and in all industries, the secret of which he kept and which excited "the admiration of the whole world." This is the age of great discovery; all is spontaneous in it; nothing is done through routine, while such is the fertility of minds they cannot touch anything without rendering it fecund.

When man's nature is so vigorous, so richly endowed, so productive, when the faculties play with such buoyancy and precision, when activity is so constant and so striking, the tone of the soul is ordinarily an excess of joyousness, an unbounded gaiety and animation. We find Cellini, for instance, after his tragic and terrible experiences, setting out on a journey, and all along the road, he says, "I did nothing but sing and laugh." This prompt recovery of spirits is frequent in Italy, and especially in this age when minds are still simple. "My sister Liberata," he says, "after having for a while lamented her father, her sister, her husband and a little son she had lost, began to prepare supper; and

during the rest of the evening there was not a word more spoken of the dead, but the conversation turned upon all of the most joyous and gay topics that could be thought of; thus we supped together in the greatest cheerfulness imaginable."

The assaults, the attacks on shops, the dangers of poison and assassination amidst which he lived at Rome are intermingled constantly with suppers, masquerades, humorous devices and love scrapes so frank, so free of any delicacy or concealment that they resemble the great Venetian and Florentine nudities in contemporary pictures. You can read of them in the text. Incidents of this kind are too broad to be exposed in public; but they are only broad; they are not made worse by low humor or refinements of obscenity; man becomes jolly and free in his pleasures as water follows a slope; healthiness of soul and senses, intact and youthful, the fire of animal exuberance, bursts out in voluptuousness as in works and actions.

A moral and physical organism of this stamp naturally evolves the lively imagination which I have but just now described to you. A man thus

fashioned does not perceive objects fragmentarily and through words, as we do, but in mass and by means of images. His ideas are not sundered, classed, and cast in abstract formulas like ours; they leap forth, entire, colored, and alive. While we reflect, he *sees*. Hence he is often visionary. These full heads, peopled with picturesque images, are always boiling and tempestuous. Benvenuto has infantile faith; he is as superstitious as the most ignorant peasant. A certain Pierino, who vilified him and his family, exclaimed in a fit of anger, "If I do not speak truly may my house fall down on my head!" A little while after his house, in fact, did fall and he had a leg broken. Benvenuto does not fail to consider this event as an act of Providence who wished to punish Pierino for lying. He narrates very seriously that, being at Rome, he became acquainted with a magician who, having conducted him one night to the Colosseum, cast a certain powder on burning coals, uttering, at the same time, some magical words; immediately the entire enclosure appeared filled with devils. He evidently had an hallucination that day. While in prison his head

ferments; if he does not succumb to his wounds and the fetid atmosphere it is owing to his mind being occupied with God. He has long conversations with his guardian angel; he hopes to see the sun again either in a dream or actually, and one day he finds himself transported to the presence of a magnificent sun from which Christ issues, and afterwards the Virgin, who make signs of mercy to him, and he beholds the heavens with the entire court of God. Imaginings of this kind are frequent in Italy. After a life of debauchery and violence, even at the height of his vices, man suddenly becomes changed. The Duke of Ferrara "having been attacked with a grave malady which stopped his secretions for over forty-eight hours had recourse to God and ordered all back salaries to be paid." Hercules d'Este, on leaving an orgie, went to sing divine service with his company of French musicians; he either put out an eye or cut off the hand of two hundred and eighty prisoners before selling them, and on Holy Thursday he is found washing the feet of the poor. Pope Alexander, likewise, on learning the assassination of his son, beat his breast and confessed his

crimes to the assembled cardinals. The imagination, instead of working on the side of pleasure, works on the side of fear, and, through a similar operation, their intellect receives religious images as vividly as the sensuous images which assailed them before.

From this fury and feverishness of the intellect, from this interior trepidation by which absorbing and blinding images shake the whole soul and the whole corporeal machinery, is born a species of action peculiar to the men of this time. This action is impetuous and irresistible, aiming directly and suddenly at what is most extreme, at conflict, at murder, at bloodshed. There is in the life of Benvenuto hundreds of examples of these tempests and thunder gusts. He gets into a dispute with two rival goldsmiths who begin to disparage him:

"I being a stranger to fear,* little regarded their menaces. . . . Whilst I spoke thus, one Gherardo Guasconti, a cousin of theirs who was in all probability set on by them, took the opportunity as a

* English translation of the Life of Benvenuto Cellini by Thomas Nugent.

beast loaded with bricks happened to pass by to push it so violently against me that I was very much hurt; upon which I instantly turned about, and seeing him laugh, gave him so violent a blow on the temple, that he fell down and lay upon the ground motionless and insensible: then, turning to his cousins, I said to them, 'That is the way I use cowardly rascals like you!' And as they, confiding in their number, seemed preparing to take their revenge, I, in a violent passion, drew a little knife, and vented my anger in these words: 'If any one of you offer to quit the shop, let another run for a confessor, as there will be no occasion for a physician.' This declaration struck such terror into them all, that not one of them ventured to stir to the assistance of his cousin." Upon this he is summoned before the tribunal of the Eight, a body of magistrates administering justice in Florence, and he is condemned to a penalty of four measures of meal.

"Inflamed by this treatment and being naturally of a very passionate temper I waited till the court was broken up and the magistrates gone to dinner; finding myself then alone, and that I was no longer

observed by any of the officers of the court, I left the place in a violent fury, and went in all haste to my workshop, where I took up a dagger, and ran to attack my adversaries. I found them at table, and young Gherardo, who had been the chief cause of the quarrel, immediately flew at me. I thereupon gave him a stab in the breast, which pierced through his cloak and doublet, without once reaching his skin, or doing him any sort of harm; imagining, however, from the rustling of his clothes upon my giving the stab, and from his falling flat on the ground through fright and astonishment, that I had done him some great hurt, I cried out, 'Traitors, this is the day that I shall be revenged upon you all.' The father, mother, and sisters thinking that the day of judgment was come, fell prostrate on their knees, and, with voices full of terror and consternation, implored my protection. Seeing then that none of my adversaries stood upon the defensive, and that Gherardo lay stretched out upon the ground like a corpse, I scorned to meddle with them, but ran down stairs like a madman. When I got into the street I found the rest of the family who were above a dozen in

number, ready to attack me; one of them held a ball of iron, another a thick iron tube, others a hammer taken from an anvil, and others, again, had cudgels in their hands. Rushing amongst them like a mad bull I threw down four or five, and fell to the ground along with them, now aiming my dagger at one and now at another."

Always, with him, the action and the blow follow the thought instantly, as the explosion follows the flash. The too powerful inward excitement prevents any reflection, fear, or sentiment of justice; any of that interference of calculation and reasoning which, in a civilized brain, or in a phlegmatic temperament, puts an interval, like some soft fender, between the first impulse of rage and the final resolution. In an inn, the uneasy host, and who, doubtless, had reason for being so, wanted to be paid in advance before supplying him with some necessary things: "I never closed my eyes the whole night, my mind being entirely occupied with thinking of a way of avenging myself. I thought first, that I would set fire to the house, and then slay the good horses which the innkeeper had in his stable. All this seemed to me

easy to carry out, but I did not see that it was equally easy for my companion and myself to escape." He contents himself with cutting and hacking four of the beds with a knife. Another day, being at Florence, preparing to cast his Perseus, he is attacked with a fever: the excessive heat and the length of his watches in superintending the casting, had so exhausted him that they thought his last hour had come. One of his men runs in and cries out that the casting had failed. "I uttered a yell so terrible that it might have been heard in the seventh heaven. I jumped out of bed, took my clothes and began to dress myself, giving either kicks or cuffs to the maid-servants or the boys who came to help me on with them." Another time he was sick and the physician had forbidden any one to give him anything to drink; the servant, taking pity on him, gave him some water. "They told me afterwards that, on learning this, my poor Felice was almost ready to drop down dead;" he took a stick and cudgeled the girl, upbraiding her bitterly for her treacherous conduct and declaring that she had been the cause of his death. Servants were as

ready to strike as their masters, and not only with clubs, but with swords. Benvenuto being in prison in the castle of St. Angelo, his pupil, Ascanio, meeting a certain Michelle, who made fun of him, was told by him that Benvenuto was undoubtedly dead. "'He is alive,' retorted Ascanio, 'but you shall die,' and thereupon he gave him two blows with his sabre on his head. The first one stretched him on the ground while the other, glancing off, cut off three of the fingers of his right hand." There are an infinite number of similar occurrences. Benvenuto wounds or kills his pupil Luigi, the courtesan Penthesilea, his enemy Pompeo, innkeepers, seigniors, brigands, in France, in Italy, everywhere. Let us take one of these stories and carefully consider the petty details of the narrative which portrays these sentiments.

The death of Bertino Aldobrandi, a pupil of Benvenuto's brother, and which had just taken place, is reported to him:

"At this my brother set up a loud howl, which might be heard ten miles off, and said to Giovanni: 'Alas, unhappy wretch that I am, can you tell me

which of them it was that killed him?' Giovanni made answer that it was one of those who wore a large two-handed sword, with a blue feather in his hat. My poor brother having come forward and knowing the person by the mark he had been told of, fell upon the murderer with great agility and bravery, and in spite of all resistance ran his sword through his body, pushing him with the hilt of it to the ground. He then assailed the rest with such intrepidity that he alone, and unassisted, would have put all the guards to flight, had it not been that, unluckily turning about to discharge his fury upon a musketeer, the latter, finding himself obliged to fire in his own defense, hit the valiant but unfortunate youth just above the knee of the right leg which brought him to the ground; whereupon the guards made haste to retreat, lest some other such formidable champion should fly to his assistance."

The poor young fellow is carried to Cellini's house; the treatment not being successful, the surgeons of that epoch not being skillful, he dies of the wound. Cellini hereupon becomes enraged and his brain swims with ideas:

"My sole distraction was to watch the musketeer who had killed my brother, as a man eyes a mistress. . . . Perceiving that my solicitude and anxious desire of revenge deprived me of both sleep and appetite I prepared to put an end to my torment, without giving any heed to what was not laudable in such an undertaking. . . . I, with great address, came close up to him with a long dagger, similar to a hunting knife. I hoped to fell him with a blow behind his head but he turned round so suddenly the blow only fell on his right shoulder, fracturing the bone. He got up, dropped his sword and, writhing with the pain, he took to his heels. I followed him and in four paces I came up with him, when raising my dagger above his head, which he bent down low, I struck him between the collar bone and the back of his neck, so deeply that, in spite of every effort, I could not withdraw the blade."

Complaint, accordingly, is made to the Pope. But, before going to the palace, he takes care to execute several exquisite pieces of goldsmith's work. "When I came into the presence of the pontiff, he

frowned on me very much which caused me to tremble; but as soon as he saw my work his countenance began to clear up." Another time, and after a much less excusable murder, the Pope replies to the friends of the man killed by Cellini: "You must know that men who are unique in their art, like Cellini, must not be subjected to the law, and he less than any other for I know how right he is." This shows you to what extent the practice of murder had then taken root in Italy. The sovereign of the state, the vicar of God, finds it natural to do one's self justice, protecting the murderer through his indifference or his indulgence, through his partiality or his forgiveness.

Out of this condition of mind and of manners originate innumerable consequences affecting art. In the first place the men of this period are obliged to be interested in one thing with which we are no longer familiar, because we no longer have it before us and pay no attention to it, and that is the body, the muscles and the different attitudes which the human figure in action presents to us. At this epoch a man, no matter what his rank might be, is

expected to be a man of arms, to be skilled in the use of the sword and dagger in his own defense; consequently, and without being aware of it, he charges his memory with every form and attitude of the active or militant body. Count Balthazar de Castiglione, in describing a polished society, enumerates the exercises in which a man who is well brought up should be expert. You will see that gentlemen of those days have the education and, consequently, the ideas, not only of a master of arms, but again of a bull-fighter, of a gymnast, of a horseman, of a knight-errant.

"I require," says Castiglione, "that our courtier be a complete horseman, and, as it is a special merit of Italians to govern the horse with the bridle, to manœuvre it systematically, especially horses difficult of control, to run with lances, and to joust, let him in these matters be an Italian among the best. In tourneys and passages at arms, and in races within barriers, let him be one of the good among the best of the French. . . . In cudgeling, bull-fighting, casting darts and lances let him excel among the Spaniards. . . . It is well, again, that he should

know how to run and to jump. Another noble exercise is tennis, and I esteem it no slight merit to know how to leap a horse."

These are not simple maxims confined to conversation or to books; they were put in practice; the habits of men of the highest rank were in conformity with them. Julian de Medici, who was assassinated by the Pazzi, is lauded by his biographer, not only for his talent in poetry and his tact as a connoisseur, but again for his skill in managing the horse, in wrestling, and in throwing the lance. Cæsar Borgia, that great assassin and able politician, possessed hands as vigorous as his intellect and his will. His portrait shows us the man of fashion, and his history the diplomatist; but his private life also shows us the matadore as we see it in Spain from whence his family came. "He is twenty-seven years old," says a contemporary; "he has a very handsome figure and the Pope, his father, is much afraid of him. He has slain six wild bulls, fighting them on horseback with a pike, and he split the head of one of these bulls at a single blow."

Consider men thus educated, with experience in and taste for all corporeal exercises; they are fully qualified to comprehend the representation of the body, that is to say, painting and sculpture; a rearing horse, the curvature of a thigh, an uplifted arm, the projection of a muscle, every function and every form of the human body arouse in their minds inward and pre-existing images. They can be interested in its members, and become connoisseurs through instinct, without any self-distrust.

In the next place, the absence of justice and of a police, an aggressive life, and the constant presence of extreme danger fill the soul with energetic, simple and grand passions. It is accordingly ready to appreciate energy, simplicity and grandeur in attitudes and in figures; for the source of taste is sympathy, and in order that an expressive object should please us its expression must be in conformity with our moral condition.

In the last place, and for the same reasons, we have a deeper sensibility; for it is forced back within us by the terrible pressure of the various trials which encircle a human life. The more a

man has suffered, dreaded or grieved, the more delighted he is to expand. The more his soul has been beset with painful anxieties or with dark thoughts, the greater his pleasure in the presence of harmonious and noble beauty. The more he has strained or bridled himself either for action or for dissimulation, the more he enjoys when he is able to give vent to and unbend himself. A calm, blooming Madonna in his alcove, the shape of a valiant youth over his dresser, occupies his eye the more agreeably after tragic preoccupations and funereal reveries. Pleasant, earnest, complex conversation, incessantly renewed and varied, does not exist there for his relief; in the silence in which he shuts himself up he discourses inwardly with forms and colors; while the usual solemnity of his life, the multitude of his perils and the obstacles in the way of his expansiveness only contribute to intensifying and refining the impressions which he derives from the arts.

Let us try to bring together these diverse traits of character and consider, on the one hand, a man of our time, rich and well educated, and on the

other, a grand seignior of the year fifteen hundred, both selected from the class in which you look for judges. Our contemporary gets up at eight o'clock in the morning, puts on his dressing-gown, takes his chocolate, goes into his library, overlooks some piles of papers if he is a business man, or turns over the leaves of some fresh publications if he is a man of society; after this, with his mind filled and at ease, having taken a few turns on a soft carpet and breakfasted in a handsome room warmed with a heater, he goes out to promenade on the boulevard, smoke his cigar and visit a club to read the newspapers, and talk about literature, stock quotations, politics or railroad improvements. When he goes home, if on foot, an hour after midnight, he knows that the streets are lined with policemen and that no accident can well happen to him. His spirit is perfectly calm and he goes to bed thinking that to-morrow he will do the same thing over again. Such is life to-day. What has this man seen in the way of the body? He has perhaps entered a cold bath-house and contemplated the grotesque pool in which every human deformity is plashing about;

perhaps, if he is curious, he has looked two or three times in his life at the market athletes; and the most decided thing in the way of the nude that he has seen, is the common pink fleshings of the opera house. What experience has he been subjected to in the matter of strong passions? Perhaps to some cases of wounded vanity or to some uneasiness about investments; he has made a poor speculation at the stock exchange or he has not secured a place he hoped to get; his friends have reported in society that he was dull; his wife spends too much money or his son has committed imprudences. But the great passions which put his own life and the life of his kindred in peril, which may bring his head to the block or in a slipping-noose, which may precipitate him into a dungeon, lead him to torture or to execution, he knows nothing of. He is too tranquil, too well protected, too much parceled out into little delicate and pleasing sensations; except the rare chance of a duel, with its ceremonial and polite accompaniments, he is ignorant of the inner state of a man who is about to kill or be killed. Consider, on the contrary, one

of those grand seigniors of whom I have just spoken. Oliveretto del Fermo, Alfonso d'Este, Cæsar Borgia, Lorenzo de Medici, and their gentlemen, all those who are at the head of affairs. The first concern in the morning for a Renaissance noble or cavalier is to strip naked with his fencing master, a dagger in one hand and a sword in the other. Thus do we see him represented in engravings. What is his life devoted to and what is his principal pleasure? It consists of cavalcades, masquerades, entries into cities, mythological pageants, tourneys, receptions of sovereigns, in which he figures on horseback magnificently dressed, displaying his laces, velvet doublets and gold embroidery, proud of his imposing aspect and of the vigorous attitude by which, along with his companions, he enhances the dignity of his sovereign. On leaving his house for the day he generally has on a full suit of armor under his doublet; he is obliged to guard against the dagger strokes and sword thrusts which may possibly greet him at the corner of the street. Even in his own palace he is not at ease; the vast stone recesses, the windows barred with

thick iron, the military solidity of the entire structure indicate a dwelling which, like a cuirass, has got to defend its master against sudden surprises. Such a man, when he is well locked up at home and sees before him the fine form of a courtesan or of a Virgin, of a Hercules, of the Eternal grandly draped or with vigorous development of muscle, is more capable than a modern of comprehending their beauty and physical perfection. He will appreciate, without being educated in a studio, through involuntary sympathy, the heroic nudities and terrible muscularities of Michael Angelo, the health, the placidity, the pure expression of a Madonna by Raphael, the natural and hardy vitality of a bronze by Donatello, the twining, strangely seductive attitude of a figure by da Vinci, the superb animal voluptuousness, the impetuous movement, the athletic force and joyousness of the figures of Giorgione and Titian.

VI.

A PICTURESQUE state of mind, that is to say, midway between pure ideas and pure images, energetic characters and passionate habits suited to giving a knowledge of and taste for beautiful physical forms, constitute the temporary circumstances which, added to the innate aptitudes of the race, produced, in Italy, the great and perfect painting of the human form. We have, now, only to descend into the streets, or to enter the studios, and we shall see it giving itself birth. It is not, as with us, a school production, an occupation of the critics, a pastime for the curious, an amateur's mania, an artificial plant cultivated at great cost, withering in spite of the compost heaped about it, foreign to the soil and painfully supported in an atmosphere made for maintaining the sciences, literatures, manufactures, policemen and dress-coats; it forms a portion of a

whole; the cities which cover their town halls and their churches with painted figures, gather around it countless *tableaux vivants* more transient but more imposing; it is only a summary of these. The men of this day are amateurs of painting, not for an hour, for a single moment in their life, but throughout their life, in their religious ceremonies, in their national festivities, in their public receptions, in their avocations and in their amusements.

Let us view them at work. We are only embarrassed in our selection. Corporations, cities, princes, prelates, put their pride and pleasure in picturesque parades and cavalcades. I select one instance among twenty. Judge for yourselves of the aspect of streets and public grounds filled with similar spectacles many times a year:

"Lorenzo de Medici was desirous that the Bronconi fraternity, of which he was the chief, should surpass in magnificence that of the Diamond. He had recourse to Jacopo Nardi, a noble and learned Florentine gentleman, who constructed six cars for him."

"The first car, drawn by two oxen covered with

leaves, represented the age of Saturn and Janus. Saturn was placed on the top of the car with his scythe, with Janus holding the keys of the Temple of Peace. Beneath the feet of these divinities Pontormo had painted Rage in chains and other subjects relating to Saturn. Accompanying the car were twelve shepherds clad in marten and ermine skins, with antique sandals on their feet, bearing baskets and crowned with garlands of leaves. The horses on which these shepherds were mounted had for saddles the skins of lions, tigers and lynxes whose claws were gilded; the cruppers were of golden cords; the spurs were shaped in the form of the heads of rams, dogs and other animals; the bridles consisted of tresses of silver and of leaves. Each shepherd was followed by four boys, less richly dressed, holding torches resembling branches of pine."

"Four oxen, covered with rich stuffs, drew the second car. From their gilded horns hung garlands of flowers and chaplets. On the car were placed Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, surrounded by books of religion, all of the sacerdotal ornaments and the instruments necessary for sacri-

fices. After this came six priests mounted on magnificent mules. Veils decked with ivy leaves embroidered with gold covered their heads. Their robes, imitated from the antique, were fringed with gold. Some of them held a casket filled with perfumes; others a golden vase or some other object of that sort. Alongside of them marched subaltern ministers bearing antique candelabra."

"On the third car, drawn by horses of great beauty, and decorated with paintings by Pontormo, was T. Manlius Torquatus, who was consul after the first Carthaginian war and whose wise rule rendered Rome flourishing. This car was preceded by twelve senators mounted on horses covered with housings of gold and accompanied with a crowd of lictors bearing the fasces, and other insignia of justice."

"Four buffaloes, disguised as elephants, pulled the fourth car, occupied by Julius Cæsar. Pontormo had painted the car with the most famous actions of the conqueror, who was followed by twelve cavaliers whose brilliant arms were enriched with gold. Each of them had a lance supported against his

thigh. Their squires bore torches figuring trophies."

"On the fifth car, drawn by winged horses, in the shape of griffins, was Cæsar Augustus. Twelve poets on horseback, crowned with laurels, accompanied the Emperor, whom their works had helped to immortalize. Each of these wore a scarf on which his name was inscribed."

"On the sixth car, painted by Pontormo, and attached to eight heifers richly caparisoned, was seated the Emperor Trajan. He was preceded by twelve doctors or jurisconsults on horseback and clothed in long togas. Scribes, copyists, and recorders bore in one hand a torch, and in the other, books."

"Succeeding these six cars came the car, or triumph, of the golden age, painted by Pontormo and ornamented by Baccio Bandinelli with numerous figures in relief and, among others, the four cardinal virtues. In the middle of this car was an immense golden globe on which was stretched a corpse covered with rusty iron armor. From the flank of this corpse issued an infant, naked and

gilded, to represent the resurrection of the age of gold and the end of the age of iron for which the world was indebted to the exaltation of Leo X. to the popedom. The dry branch of laurel, whose leaves were growing green, expressed the same idea, although many persons pretended that it was an allusion to Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino. I must add that the child which had been gilded died in a short time from the effects of the operation which it had undergone to gain ten crowns."

The death of the child is the afterpiece, at once humorous and mournful, succeeding the main piece. Dry as this enumeration may be it serves to show you the picturesque tastes of the time. They were not merely peculiar to the rich and noble, for the people possessed them likewise. Lorenzo gave his fêtes to maintain his ascendency over the people. There were others which were called carnival Chants or Triumphs. Lorenzo had enlarged and varied these; he took part in them himself; he sometimes sang his own verses and appeared in the first rank in the sumptuous ceremony. Bear in mind, gentlemen, that Lorenzo de Medici was at this epoch the

principal banker, the most liberal patron of the fine arts, the leading manufacturer of the city and, at the same time, the chief magistrate. He combined in his person the qualities which, at the present day, are distributed among the Duke de Luynes, Rothschild, the Prefect of the Seine, the Presidents respectively of the Academy of the Fine Arts, the Academy of Inscriptions, the Academy of Political and Moral Sciences and the French Academy. Such was the man who, without dreaming of compromising his dignity, paraded through the streets at the head of masquerades. The taste of the time was so decided and so earnest in this direction that this zeal, far from rendering him ridiculous, was an honor to him. Towards nightfall three hundred cavaliers and three hundred men on foot issued from his palace with torches and paraded the streets of Florence until three or four o'clock in the morning. Amongst them were musical choruses of ten, twelve and fifteen voices; the little poems sung in these masquerades have been printed and form two large volumes. I shall quote but one of them, "Bacchus and Ariadne," which was composed by

him. He is completely pagan in the sentiment of beauty and in morality. Antique paganism in fact, with its arts and intellect, then flourished a second time.

"How beautiful is youth! and yet how fleeting! Let him be happy who would be for there is no certainty of the morrow."

"Behold Bacchus and Ariadne, beautiful, and mutually enamored! While time flies and betrays us, they live happy together always."

"These nymphs and their companions, enjoy the passing hour. Let him be happy who would be for there is no certainty of the morrow!"

"These sportive satyrs, enamored of the nymphs, hide and lay in wait for them through the forests and in the caves; and meanwhile, fired by Bacchus, they leap and dance. Let him be happy who would be for there is no certainty of the morrow!"

"Amorous swains and damsels, all hail to Cupid and Bacchus! Let each tune his pipe and dance and sing! Let your hearts glow with love's sweet warmth! Banish all pain and sorrow! Let him be happy who would be for there is no certainty of the morrow."

"How beautiful is youth, and yet how fleeting!"

Besides this chorus there were many others, some sung by the gold-spinners and others by mendicants, girls, hermits, shoemakers, oil-manufacturers, and waffle-makers. All the corporations of the city took part in the festival. The spectacle would appear about the same to-day if, for several days in succession, the companies of the Opera, Opera Comique, the Chatelet and the Cirque Olympique, should parade our streets, but with this difference, that, in Florence, the crowd would not be composed of supernumeraries, so many poor fellows paid to don a costume that did not suit them. This festival was given by the city to itself and it was the city which appeared and drilled itself, in these performances, happy in self-admiration and self-contemplation like a beautiful girl offering herself to view in all the magnificence of her charms.

Nothing is more efficacious in giving an impulse to human faculties than such a common enjoyment of ideas, sentiments and tastes. It has been remarked that two conditions are essential for the production of great works; the first one is the vivac-

ity of a spontaneous sentiment, personal and characteristic, expressed according as the feeling arises, without fear of any restraint or subject to any direction; the second is the presence of sympathetic souls, the outward and steady support of kindred ideas, through which the vague ideas we carry about with us are gestated, nourished, perfected, multiplied and strengthened. This truth is patent everywhere, in religious foundations as in military undertakings, in literary works as in social amusements. The soul is like a glowing firebrand; in order to be effective, it must first burn with its own fire, and next through the flames of the firebrands which surround it. Mutual contact keeps them alive, while their augmented heat spreads the conflagration on all sides. Consider those brave little Protestant sects who, abandoning England, left it to found the United States of America; they were composed of men who dared to believe, to feel, to think profoundly, in an original and impassioned manner, each through a vigorous and peculiar conviction, and who, when once united, penetrated with the same sentiments and sustained by the same enthu-

siasm, became capable of colonizing wild territory and of founding civilized governments.

And so is it even in armies. When, at the end of the last century, the French armies, so badly organized, so inexperienced in the art of war, in the hands of officers almost as ignorant as the soldiers, met the drilled battalions of Europe, that which sustained them, that which impelled them on, that which finally brought them victory, was that spirit and force of inward belief through which each soldier considered himself superior to those he had to contend with and destined to carry truth, reason and justice against all obstacles to the heart of all nations; it was also that generous fraternity, that mutual trust, that community of sympathies and aspirations by which all, the first as well as the last, the common soldier as well as the captain and the general, felt himself devoted to the same cause; each serving as volunteer, each grasping the situation, the danger and the necessities, each ready to correct mistakes, all forming but one soul and but one will, and surpassing, through native inspiration as through unconscious agreement, that mechanical

perfection which tradition, parades, canings and the Prussian hierarchy had fabricated on the far bank of the Rhine.

Things are not otherwise when art and pleasure are in question than when it is a question of interest and of business. People of intelligence are never more intelligent than when they are all combined together. To have works of art it is necessary first to have artists, but also studios. There were studios in those days and, moreover, artists formed corporate bodies. All were united, and in the large community smaller communities existed with their members closely and voluntarily bound together. Familiarity brought them together and rivalry stimulated them. The studio of that time was a workshop and not, as nowadays, an ostentatious saloon to provoke commissions. The pupils are apprentices sharing in the life and fame of the masters, and not amateurs who consider themselves free when they have paid for their lesson. A child at school learned to read and to write, also a little spelling; when he got to be twelve or thirteen years of age he at once entered the painter's, goldsmith's,

architect's or sculptor's household; the master usually combined all these pursuits, and the young man, accordingly, studied under him not merely a fragment of art but art entire. He worked for him, he did easy things—the backgrounds of pictures, small ornamental accessories and figures; he shared in the success of the masterpiece and was interested in it the same as in his own work: he was called the master's creature.* He ate at his table, ran on errands for him, slept above him in a garret, and endured the cuffs and scoldings of his wife.†

"I remained," says Rafaello di Montelupo, "from twelve to fourteen years of age, which makes two years, with Michael Agnolo Bandinelli, and the greater portion of the time I blew the bellows for the work which the master did; sometimes I made drawings for him. One day it happened that the master set me to annealing, that is to say, reheating certain bosses of gold which were being made for Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino. He was hammering them on the anvil, and whilst he was ham-

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* Il creato.

† For instance those of Lucretia, Andrea del Sarto's wife.

mering one I was heating the other. Stopping a moment to whisper to one of his friends, and not having noticed that I had substituted the hot one for the cold one, he took hold of it and burnt the two fingers with which he grasped it. Upon which, yelling and capering about the shop, he tried to thrash me, while I, getting out of his way here and there, managed it so as not to be caught. But when the time came to eat, as I was passing near the door where the master stood, he seized me by the hair and gave me several good cuffings."

Such are the ways of associate locksmiths or masons, rude, frank, gay, and friendly; the pupils travel with the master, boxing and fencing alongside of him along the highway. They protect him from assaults and insults. You are aware of how the followers of Raphael and Cellini drew the sword or the dagger for the honor of their houses.

The masters amongst each other are equally familiar and keep up the same beneficial intimacy. One of their associations at Florence was called the Brotherhood or Society of the Paiuolo,* and

* A caldron or pot for boiling meat.

was limited to twelve members; the principal ones consisted of Andrea del Sarto, Gian Francesco Rustici, Aristote da San Gallo, Domenico Puligo, Francesco di Pellegrino, the engraver Robetta and the musician Domenico Bacelli. Each of them had the privilege of introducing three or four persons. Each brought a dish of his own invention, and whoever coincided with another paid a forfeit. Observe the vigor and vitality of these spirits, one stimulating the other, and how the arts of design found place even at a supper. One evening Gian Francesco selects an enormous cistern for a table and places his guests within it; then, from the centre of the cistern issues a tree whose branches present a dish to each one, while, underneath, are musicians playing a concert. One of the viands served up consists of a huge pie, into which is seen "Ulysses plunging his father for the purpose of making him young again,"* the two figures (of Ulysses and Laertes) being represented by two boiled capons made into the forms of men and garnished with all

* Vasari, who gives this account of the supper, is not very accurate in mythology, taking Ulysses for Œson, father of Jason.

sorts of things good to eat. "Andrea del Sarto presented on the same occasion* a temple of eight sides, resembling the Baptistery of San Giovanni in form, but raised upon columns. The pavement of this temple was an enormous dish of jelly, divided into compartments of various colors to represent mosaic; the columns which appeared to be of porphyry, were very large and thick sausages, the capitals of the columns being made of Parmesan cheese, and the cornices of sugar work, while the pulpit was formed out of sections of marchpane.† In the centre of the temple was a singing-desk made of cold veal; the (music) book was formed of vermicelli, the letters and musical notes being made of pepper-corns; the singers standing before the desk were roasted thrushes and other small birds placed upright with their beaks wide open, as in the act of chanting; they wore a sort of shirt resembling the tunic of the choristers, and this was made of a kind of network, contrived in the thinnest parts of a

* This description, more extended than the author's, is copied from Vasari's "Lives of the Painters," Bohn's edition.—Tr.

† Cake something like German gingerbread.—Tr.

caul of hog's lard; behind them stood two very fat pigeons as contra-bassi, with six ortolans, which represented the soprani, or trebles. . . . Domenico Puligo brought a roasted pig but so treated as to represent a scullery maid watching a brood of chickens. . . . Spillo, the figure of a tinker made from a great goose."

You can almost hear the shouts of laughter proceeding from this comic and fantastic humor. Another society, that of the Trowel, gives masquerades in addition to suppers. The company amuse themselves with representing at one time Proserpine and Pluto, at another time, the amours of Venus and Mars, at other times, the Mandragore of Machiavelli, the Suppositi of Ariosto, the Calandra of Cardinal Bibiena. On another occasion, as the Trowel is their emblem, the president orders the members to appear in mason's attire with all the tools of the craft, and to construct an edifice out of meat, bread, cakes and sugar. An excess of imagination thus finds vent in these picturesque junketings. Man here seems like a child, so youthful are his spirits; he everywhere introduces the corporeal

forms he loves; he resolves himself into an actor and mimic, and plays with the art with which he is overflowing.

Above these superficial societies there were others of wider scope which combined all artists together in a single effort. You have just observed in these suppers their gaiety, expansiveness and good fellowship, a burlesque simplicity and good humor which seems like that of ordinary workmen; they likewise possessed the municipal patriotism of workmen. They speak with pride of their "glorious Florentine School." According to them there is no other in which one can learn drawing. "There," says Vasari, "come the most accomplished men in the arts, and especially in painting; since, in this city, there are three things which stimulate them. The first is strict and frequent criticism; for the atmosphere of the country makes minds free by nature which can not content themselves with simply mediocre works, and which esteem what is good and beautiful rather than the name of the author. The second is the necessity of working for a living, which means that it is important to be original and judicious, discern-

ing and prompt in executing work, in short, to know how to earn one's living, because the country, being neither rich nor luxuriant, cannot support people, like other countries, with little expense. The third, which is of no less importance than the others, is a certain eagerness for fame and honor, which the atmosphere of the country greatly engenders in men of every profession, which makes them rebel against the idea of being the equals, I do not say the inferiors, of those whom they consider as masters, but on whom they look as men like themselves; an ambition and emulation so lively which, unless amiable and wise by nature, makes them ungrateful and defamatory." When the honor of the city is at stake, all concur in well-doing; the competition which leads each to surpass the other, leads them all to do better. When, in 1515, Pope Leo X. came to visit Florence, his native city, all the artists were convoked to receive him magnificently. Twelve triumphal arches were constructed in the city, decorated with statues and paintings; various monuments obelisks, columns and groups, similar to those in Rome, were erected in the intermediate places.

"On the Piazzi dei Signori, Antonio da San Gallo erected an octangular temple and Baccio Bandinelli made a colossal figure for the Loggia. Between the Abbey and the Palace of the Podestat an arch of triumph was constructed by Granaccio and Aristotete da San Gallo; and at the corner of the Bischeri another was erected by Il Rosso whose work was much admired for the beauty of its order and the variety of the figures wherewith it was decorated. But that which was esteemed the most beautiful of all was the façade erected before the cathedral church of Santa Maria del Fiore; this was of wood, so beautifully decorated by Andrea del Sarto that nothing more admirable could be desired; and as the architecture of this work was by Jacopo Sansovino, as were likewise certain historical representations in basso-relievo, with numerous figures of sculpture in full relief, it was declared by the Pope to be so fine, that the edifice could not have been more beautiful had it been of marble. The decoration here described had been invented during his lifetime by Lorenzo de Medici, the father of Pope Leo X. The same Jacopo also prepared the figure of a

Horse, on the Piazza Novella. It was in imitation of that at Rome and was considered exceedingly beautiful. An immense variety of ornaments was likewise added to the Hall of the Pope in the Via della Scala, and the full half of that street was also decorated with very beautiful stones by the hands of many artists, but the greater part of them designed by Baccio Bandinelli."*

You see that the sheaf of talents is complete, and to what height it attains through association. The city labors to beautify itself; now it is given up entire to a carnival or to the reception of a prince; to-morrow, and throughout the year, it will be its different wards, its corporations, brotherhoods or convents, each little group, "richer in feeling than in money," carried away by its zeal, at once superstitious and popular, priding itself in handsomely decorating its chapel or monastery, its portico and its public meeting-place, its costumes and tournament banners, its cars and its insignia for the fête of St. John. Never was mutual excitement so pow-

* See Life of Andrea del Sarto in Vasari's works for the particulars of these commissions.

erful or so universal; never was the temperature requisite for the growth of the arts of design so favorable; never has a similar moment and similar surroundings been seen. The conjunction of circumstances is unique; a race endowed with a rhythmic and figurative imagination attains to modern culture while preserving feudal customs, harmonizes energetic instincts with refined ideas, uses outward forms in the process of thinking, and, its genius pushed to extreme by the spontaneous, sympathetic, contagious inspiration of the small free groups which compose it, discovers the ideal model whose bodily perfection can alone express the noble paganism which it, for a moment, revives. All art which represents the forms of the body depends on this cluster of conditions. The highest order of painting depends on this cluster of conditions. According as one is wanting or undergoes a change so is the other wanting and affected by the change. The former did not arise so long as the latter was incomplete. It began to weaken when the other began to disintegrate. It kept pace with the formation, the greatness, the dismemberment and the ruin of the

latter. This order of painting remained symbolic and mystic up to the end of the fourteenth century, under the control of christian theological ideas. It perpetuated the symbolic and mystic school down to the middle of the fifteenth century,* during the long contest between the christian spirit and the pagan spirit. In the middle of the fifteenth century its most angelic interpreter is found in a holy spirit preserved from paganism by the seclusion of the cloister.† It began to be interested in the real and substantial body during the early years of the fifteenth century, and, following in the footsteps of sculpture, through the discovery of perspective, the study of anatomy, the perfection of modeling, the appliance of portraiture and the use of oil, when, at the same period, the mitigation of warfare, the pacification of cities, the development of manufactures, the increase of wealth and comforts, the restoration of ancient ideas and literature brought back

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* Paro Spinello and the Bicci still painted in the Giotto manner in 1444.

† Fra Angelico.

to the present life eyes hitherto bent on the future, and substituted for the hope of celestial felicity the search for terrestrial happiness. It passed over from exact imitation to creative beauty when, at the time of Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Lorenzo de Medici and Francesco della Rovere, superior culture, enlarging the mind and perfecting ideas, produced a national literature alongside of the classic restoration and a finished paganism far beyond the rudely sketched hellenism. It maintained itself at Venice half a century later than elsewhere, in a sort of oasis rescued from the barbarians, in an independent city where toleration was upheld in the face of the Pope, patriotism in the face of the Spaniards and military habits in the face of the Turks. It became enfeebled in the time of Correggio, and chilled under the successors of Michael Angelo when accumulated miseries and invasions had broken the spring of human will; when a lay monarchy, the ecclesiastical inquisition and academical pedantry had regulated and reduced the sap of native invention; when habits assumed a decorous air and minds took a sentimental turn; when the painter

who was a simple artisan became a polished cavalier; when the shop with its apprentices gave way to an "Academy"; when the bold and free artist, who performed and sculptured his jests in the suppers of the "Trowel,"* became a diplomatic courtier convinced of his own importance, a respecter of etiquette, a defender of rules, and the vain flatterer of prelates and the great. By this exact and constant correspondence we see that if high art and its surrounding conditions are contemporary it is not a chance combination, but the second rough draught, developing, ripening, decaying, and dissolving with itself the first one, athwart the accidents of the great human medley and the unforeseen outbursts of individual originality. It leads or carries away art in its wake as a temperature more or less cool forms or suppresses the dew, as a weaker or stronger light nourishes or blanches the green of a plant. Analogous customs, which were still more perfect of their kind,

* "The fêtes they gave," says Vasari, "were infinite in number; but the custom of forming such companies is now abandoned." By way of contrast see the lives of Guido, the Caracci, Lanfranco. Ludivico Caracci was the first who, instead of Messer, had himself called the Magnifico.

once produced an analogous and still more perfect art in the small martial cities and in the noble gymnasia of ancient Greece. Analogous customs, but of their kind a little less perfect, produced, in establishing itself in Spain, in Flanders and even in France, an analogous art, although altered or perverted by the original dispositions of the races amongst which it is transplanted; and we may come to this conclusion with certainty that, to bring a similar art afresh on the world's stage there must be a lapse of centuries, which will first establish here a similar *milieu.*

ART

IN THE

NETHERLANDS

TO

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

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PART I.

PERMANENT CAUSES.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN THE NETHERLANDS.

During the last three years I have explained to you the history of painting in Italy; this year I propose to set before you the history of painting in the Netherlands.

Two groups of mankind have been, and still are, the principal factors of modern civilization; on the one hand, the Latin or Latinized people—the Italians, French, Spanish and Portuguese, and on the other, the Germanic people—the Belgians, Dutch, Germans, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, English, Scotch and Americans. In the Latin group the Italians are undeniably the best artists; in the Germanic group they are indisputably the Flemings and the Dutch. In studying, accordingly, the history of art along with these two races, we are studying the history of modern art with its greatest and most opposite representatives.

A product so vast and varied, an art enduring nearly four hundred years, an art enumerating so many masterpieces and imprinting on all its works an original and common character, is a national product; it is consequently intimately associated with the national life, and is rooted in the national character itself. It is a flowering long and deeply matured through a development of vitality conformably to the acquired structure and primitive organization of the plant. According to our method we shall first study the innate and preliminary history which explains the outward and final history. I shall first show you the seed, that is to say the race, with its fundamental and indelible qualities, those that persist through all circumstances and in all climates; and next the plant, that is to say the people itself, with its original qualities expanded or contracted, in any case grafted on and transformed by its surroundings and its history; and finally the flower, that is to say the art, and especially painting, in which this development culminates.

I.

The men who inhabit the Netherlands belong, for the most part, to that race which invaded the Roman empire in the fifth century, and which then, for the first time, claimed its place in broad sunshine alongside of Latin nations. In certain countries, in Gaul, Spain and Italy, it simply brought chiefs and a supplement to the primitive population. In other countries, as in England and the Netherlands, it drove out, destroyed and replaced the ancient inhabitants, its blood, pure, or almost pure, still flowing in the veins of the men now occupying the same soil. Throughout the middle ages the Netherlands were called Low Germany. The Belgic and Dutch languages are dialects of the German, and, except in the Walloon district, where a corrupt French is spoken, they form the popular idiom of the whole country.

Let us consider the common characteristics of the Germanic race, and the differences by which it is opposed to the Latin race. Physically, we have

a whiter and softer skin, generally speaking, blue eyes, often of a porcelain or pale hue, paler as you approach the north, and sometimes glassy in Holland; hair of a flaxy blonde, and, with children, almost white; the ancient Romans early wondered at it, and stated that infants in Germany had the hair of old men. The complexion is of a charming rose, infinitely delicate among young girls, and lively and tinged with vermilion among young men, and sometimes even among the aged; ordinarily, however, among the laboring classes and in advanced life I have found it wan, turnip-hued, and in Holland cheese-colored, and mouldy cheese at that. The body is generally large, but thick-set or burly, heavy and inelegant. In a similar manner the features are apt to be irregular, especially in Holland, where they are flabby, with projecting cheek-bones and strongly-marked jaws. They lack, in short, sculptural nobleness and delicacy. You will rarely find the features regular like the numerous pretty faces of Toulouse and Bordeaux, or like the spirited and handsome heads which abound in the vicinity of Rome and Florence. You will much

oftener find exaggerated features, incoherent combinations of form and tones, curious fleshy protuberances, so many natural caricatures. Taking them for works of art, living forms testify to a clumsy and fantastic hand through their more incorrect and weaker drawing.

Observe now this body in action, and you will find its animal faculties and necessities of a grosser kind than among the Latins; matter and mass seem to predominate over motion and spirit; it is voracious and even carnivorous. Compare the appetite of an Englishman, or even a Hollander, with that of a Frenchman or an Italian; those among you who have visited the country can call to mind the public dinner tables and the quantities of food, especially meat, tranquilly swallowed several times a day by a citizen of London, Rotterdam or Antwerp. In English novels people are always lunching—the most sentimental heroine, at the end of the third volume, having consumed an infinite number of buttered muffins, cups of tea, bits of chicken, and sandwiches. The climate contributes to this; in the fogs of the north, people could not sustain themselves, like a

peasant of the Latin race, on a bowl of soup or a piece of bread flavored with garlic, or on a plate of macaroni. For the same reason the German is fond of potent beverages. Tacitus had already remarked it, and Ludovico Guiccardini, an eye-witness in the sixteenth century, whom I shall repeatedly quote, says, in speaking of the Belgians and Hollanders: "Almost all are addicted to drunkenness, which vice, with them, is a passion. They fill themselves with liquor every evening, and even at day-break." At the present time, in America and in Europe, in most of the German countries, intemperance is the national bane; half of the suicides and mental maladies flow from it. Even among the reflective and those in good circumstances the fondness for liquor is very great: in Germany and in England it is not regarded as disreputable for a well-educated man to rise from the table partially intoxicated; now and then he becomes completely drunk. With us, on the contrary, it is a reproach, in Italy a disgrace, and in Spain, during the last century, the name of drunkard was an insult which a duel could not wholly wipe out, provoking, as it often did, the dagger. There is nothing of

this sort in German countries; hence the great number and frequency of breweries and the innumerable shops for the retailing of ardent spirits and different kinds of beer, all bearing witness to the public taste. Enter, in Amsterdam, one of these little shops, garnished with polished casks, where glass after glass is swallowed of white, yellow, green and brown brandy, strengthened with pepper and pimento. Place yourself at nine o'clock in the evening in a Brussels brewery, near a dark wooden table around which the hawkers of crabs, salted rolls and hard-boiled eggs circulate; observe the people quietly seated there, each one intent on himself, sometimes in couples, but generally silent, smoking, eating, and drinking bumpers of beer which they now and then warm up with a glass of spirits; you can understand sympathetically the strong sensation of heat and animal plenitude which they feel in their speechless solitude, in proportion as superabundant solid and liquid nourishment renews in them the living substance, and as the whole body partakes in the gratification of the satisfied stomach.

One point more of their exterior remains to be

shown which especially strikes people of southern climes, and that is the sluggishness and torpidity of their impressions and movements. An umbrella-dealer of Amsterdam, a Toulousian, almost threw himself into my arms on hearing me speak French, and for a quarter of an hour I had to listen to the story of his griefs. To a temperament as lively as his, the people of this country were intolerable—"stiff, frigid, with no sensibility or sentiment, dull and insipid, perfect turnips, sir, perfect turnips!" And, truly, his cackling and expansiveness formed a contrast. It seems, on addressing them, as if they did not quite comprehend you, or that they required time to set their expressional machinery agoing; the keeper of a gallery, a household servant, stands gaping at you a minute before answering. In coffee-houses and in public conveyances the phlegm and passivity of their features are remarkable; they do not feel as we do the necessity of moving about and talking—they remain stationary for hours, absorbed with their own ideas or with their pipes. At evening parties in Amsterdam, ladies, bedecked like shrines, and motionless on their chairs, seem to

be statues. In Belgium, in Germany and in England, the faces of the peasantry seem to us inanimate, devitalized or benumbed. A friend, returning from Berlin, remarked to me, "those people all have dead eyes." Even the young girls look simple and drowsy. Many a time have I paused before a shop-window to contemplate some rosy, placid and candid face, a mediæval madonna making up the fashions. It is the very reverse of this in our land and in Italy, where the grisette's eyes seem to be gossiping with the chairs for lack of something better, and where a thought, the moment it is born, translates itself into gesture. In Germanic lands the channels of sensation and expression seem to be obstructed; delicacy, impulsiveness, and readiness of action appear impossible; a southerner has to exclaim at their awkwardness and lack of adroitness, and this was the deliberate opinion of our French in the wars of the Revolution and the Empire. In this respect the toilette and deportment afford us the best indications, especially if we take the middle and lower classes of society. Compare the grisettes of Rome, Bologna, Paris and Toulouse

with the huge mechanical dolls to be seen at Hampton Court on Sundays, starched and stiff in their blue scarfs, staring silks and gilded belts, and other details of a pompous extravagance. I remember at this moment two fêtes—one at Amsterdam to which the rich peasant women of Friesland flocked, their heads decked with a fluted cap and a hat like a cabriolet rearing itself convulsively, whilst on the temples and brow were two gold plates, a gold pediment and gold corkscrews surrounding a wan and distorted countenance; the other at Fribourg, in Brisgau, where, planted on their solid feet, the village women stood vaguely staring at us and exhibiting themselves in their national costume—so many black, red, purple and green skirts, with stiff folds like those of gothic statues, a swollen corsage front and rear, massive sleeves puffed out like legs of mutton, forms girded close under the armpits, dull, yellow hair twisted into a knot and drawn towards the top of the head, chignons in a net of gold and silver embroidery, and above this a man's hat, like an orange-colored pipe, the heteroclite crown of a body seemingly hewn out with a cleaver, and vaguely

suggesting a painted sign-post. In brief, the human animal of this race is more passive and more gross than the other. One is tempted to regard him as inferior on comparing him with the Italian or southern Frenchman, so temperate, so quick intellectually, who is naturally apt in expression, in chatting and in pantomine, possessing taste and attaining to elegance, and who, without effort, like the Provençals of the twelfth, and the Florentines of the fourteenth century, become cultivated, civilized and accomplished at the first effort.

We must not confine ourselves to this first glance which presents only one phase of things; there is another associated with it, as light accompanies dark. This finesse, and this precocity, natural to the Latin families, leads to many bad results. It is the source of their craving for agreeable sensations; they are exacting in their comforts; they demand many and varied pleasures, whether coarse or refined, an entertaining conversation, the amenities of politeness, the satisfactions of vanity, the sensualities of love, the delights of novelty and of accident, the harmonious symmetries of form and

of phrase; they readily develope into rhetoricians, dilettanti, epicureans, voluptuaries, libertines, gallants and worldlings. It is indeed through these vices that their civilization becomes corrupt or ends; you encounter them in the decline of ancient Greece and Rome, in Provençe of the twelfth, in Italy of the sixteenth, in Spain of the seventeenth, and in France of the eighteenth centuries. Their more quickly cultivated temperament bears them more speedily on to subtleties. Coveting keen emotions, they cannot be happy with moderate ones: they are like people who, accustomed to eating oranges, throw away carrots and turnips; and yet it is carrots and turnips, and other equally insipid vegetables, which make up our ordinary diet. It is in Italy that a noble lady exclaims, on partaking of a delicious ice-cream, "What a pity there is no sin in it!" In France a noble lord remarks, speaking of a diplomatic roué, "Who wouldn't admire him, he is so wicked!" In other directions their vivacity of impression and promptness of action render them improvisators; they are so quickly and so deeply excited by a crisis as to forget duty and reason,

resorting to daggers in Italy and Spain, and to pistols in France; showing by this that they are only moderately capable of biding their time, of self-subordination, and of maintaining order. Success in life depends on knowing how to be patient, how to endure drudgery, how to unmake and remake, how to recommence and continue without allowing the tide of anger or the flight of the imagination to arrest or divert the daily effort. In fine, if we compare their faculties with the world as it runs, it is too mechanical, too rude, and too monotonous for them, and they too lively, too delicate, and too brilliant for it. Always after the lapse of centuries this discord shows itself in their civilization; they demand too much of things, and, through their misconduct, fail even to reach that which things might confer on them.

Suppress, now, these fortunate endowments, and, on the dark side, these mischievous tendencies,—imagine on the slow and substantial body of the German a well-organized brain, a sound mind, and trace the effects. With less lively impressions a man thus fashioned will be more collected and more thought-

ful; less solicitous of agreeable emotions, he can, without weariness, do disagreeable things. His senses being blunter, he prefers depth to form, and truth within to show without. As he is less impulsive he is less subject to impatience and to unreasonable outbursts; he has an idea of sequence, and can persist in enterprises the issue of which is of long achievement. Finally, with him the understanding is the better master, because outward temptations are weaker and inward explosions rarer; reason governs better where there is less inward rebellion and less outward attack. Consider, in effect, the Germanic people of the present day and throughout history. They are, primarily, the great laborers of the world; in matters of intellect none equal them; in erudition, in philosophy, in the most crabbed linguistic studies, in voluminous editions, dictionaries and other compilations, in researches of the laboratory, in all science, in short, whatever stern and hard, but necessary and preparatory work there is to be done, that is their province; patiently, and with most commendable self-sacrifice they hew out every stone that enters into the edifice of modern times. In material matters the

English, Americans and Dutch perform the same service. I should like to show you an English spinner or cloth-dresser at work; he is a perfect automaton, occupied day in and day out without a moment's relaxation, and the tenth hour as well as the first. If he is in a workshop with French workmen, these form a striking contrast; they are unable to adapt themselves to the same mechanical regularity; they are sooner tired and inattentive, and thus produce less at the end of the day; instead of eighteen hundred spools, they only turn out twelve hundred. The farther south you go the less the capacity. A Provençal or Italian must gossip, sing and dance; he is a willing lounger, and lives as he can, and in this way easily contents himself with a threadbare coat. Indolence there seems natural and honorable. A *noble life*, the laziness of the man who, to save his honor, lives on expedients, and sometimes fasts, has been the curse of Spain and Italy for the last two hundred years. On the other hand, in the same epoch, the Fleming, the Hollander, the Englishman and the German have gloried in providing themselves with all useful things; the instinctive repugnance

which leads an ordinary man to shun trouble, the puerile vanity which leads the cultivated man to distinguish himself from the artizan, disappear alongside of their good sense and reason.

This same reason and this same good sense establish and maintain amongst them diverse descriptions of social engagements, and first, the conjugal bond. You are aware that among the Latin families this is not over respected; in Italy, Spain and France adultery is always the principal subject of the play and the romance; at all events, literature in these lands always incarnates passion in the hero, and is prodigal of sympathy for him by granting him all privileges. In England, on the contrary, the novel is a picture of loyal affection and the laudation of wedlock; in Germany, gallantry is not honorable, even among students. In Latin countries it is excused or accepted, and even sometimes approved of. The matrimonial yoke, and the monotony of the household, there seem galling. Sensational allurements penetrate too deeply; the caprices of the imagination there are too brusque; the mind creates for itself visions of transports and of ecstatic

delight, or at least a romance of exciting and varied sensuality, and at the first opportunity the suppressed flood bursts forth, carrying with it every barrier of duty and of law. Consider Spain, Italy and France in the sixteenth century; read the tales of Bandello, the comedies of Lope de Vega, the narratives of Brantôme, and listen for a moment to the comment of Guiccardini, a contemporary, on the social habits of the Netherlands. "They hold adultery in horror . . . Their women are extremely circumspect, and are consequently allowed much freedom. They go out alone to make visits, and even journeys without evil report; they are able to take care of themselves. Moreover they are housekeepers, and love their households." Only very lately, again, a wealthy and noble Hollander named to me several young ladies belonging to his family who had no desire to see the Great Exposition, and who remained at home whilst their husbands and brothers visited Paris. A disposition so calm and so sedentary diffuses much happiness throughout domestic life; in the repose of curiosity and of desire the ascendancy of pure ideas is much greater;

the constant presence of the same person not being wearisome, the memory of plighted faith, the sentiment of duty and of self-respect easily prevails against temptations which elsewhere triumph because they are elsewhere more powerful. I can say as much of other descriptions of association, and especially of the free assemblage. This, practically, is a very difficult thing. To make the machine work regularly, without obstruction, those who compose it must have calm nerves and be governed by the end in view. One is expected to be patient in a 'meeting,' to allow himself to be contradicted and even vilified, await his turn for speaking, reply with moderation, and submit twenty times in succession to the same argument enlivened with figures and documentary facts. It will not answer to fling aside the newspaper the moment its political interest flags, nor take up politics for the pleasure of discussion and speech-making, nor excite insurrections against officials the moment they become distasteful, which is the fashion in Spain and elsewhere. You yourselves have some knowledge of a country where the government has been overthrown because in

active and because the nation felt ennui. Among Germanic populations, people meet together not to talk but to act; politics is a matter to be wisely managed, they bring to bear on it the spirit of business; speech is simply a means, while the effect, however remote, is the end in view. They subordinate themselves to this end, and are full of deference for the persons who represent it. How unique! Here the governed respect the governing; if the latter prove objectionable they are resisted, but legally and patiently; if institutions prove defective, they are gradually reformed without being disrupted. Germanic countries are the patrimony of free parliamentary rule. You see it established today in Sweden, in Norway, in England, in Belgium, in Holland, in Prussia, and even in Austria; the colonists engaged in clearing Australia and the West of America, plant it in their soil, and, however rude the new-comers may be, it prospers at once, and is maintained without difficulty. We find it at the outset in Belgium and Holland; the old cities of the Netherlands were republics, and so maintained themselves throughout the middle ages

in spite of their feudal suzerains. Free communities arose, and maintained themselves without effort, at once, the small as well as the great, and in the great whole. In the sixteenth century we find in each city, and even in small towns, companies of arquebusiers and rhetoricians, of which more than two hundred have been enumerated. In Belgium to-day there still flourish an infinity of similar corporations, societies of archers, of musicians, of pigeon fanciers, and for singing birds. In Holland volunteer associations of private individuals minister to every requirement of public charity. To act in a body, no one person oppressing another, is a wholly Germanic talent, and one which gives them such an empire over matter; through patience and reflection they conform to the laws of physical and human nature, and instead of opposing them profit by them.

If, now, from action we turn to speculation, that is to say to the mode of conceiving and figuring the world, we shall find the same imprint of this thoughtful and slightly sensualistic genius. The Latins show a decided taste for the external and decorative aspect of things, for a pompous display

feeding the senses and vanity, for logical order, outward symmetry and pleasing arrangement, in short, for form. The Germanic people, on the contrary, have rather inclined to the inward order of things, to truth itself, in fact, to the fundamental. Their instinct leads them to avoid being seduced by appearances, to remove mystery, to seize the hidden, even when repugnant and sorrowful, and not to eliminate or withhold any detail, even when vulgar and unsightly. Among the many products of this instinct there are two which place it in full light through the strongly marked contrast in each of form and substance, and these are literature and religion. The literatures of Latin populations are classic and nearly or remotely allied to Greek poesy, Roman eloquence, the Italian renaissance, and the age of Louis XIV.; they refine and ennoble, they embellish and prune, they systematize and give proportion. Their latest masterpiece is the drama of Racine, who is the painter of princely ways, court proprieties, social paragons, and cultivated natures; the master of an oratorical style, skilful composition and literary elegance. The Germanic litera-

tures, on the contrary, are romantic; their primitive source is the Edda and the ancient sagas of the north; their greatest masterpiece is the drama of Shakespeare, that is to say the crude and complete representation of actual life, with all its atrocious, ignoble and common-place details, its sublime and brutal instincts, the entire outgrowth of human character displayed before us, now in a familiar style bordering on the trivial, and now poetic even to lyricism, always independent of rule, incoherent, excessive, but of an incomparable force, and filling our souls with the warm and palpitating passion of which it is the outcry. In a similar manner take religion, and view it at the critical moment when the people of Europe had to choose their faith, that is to say in the sixteenth century; those who have studied original documents know what this at that time meant; what secret preferences kept some in the ancient faith and led others to take the new one. All Latin populations, up to the last, remained Catholic; they were not willing to renounce their intellectual habits; they remained faithful to tradition; they continued subject to authority; they

were affected through sensuous externalities—the pomp of worship, the imposing system of the Catholic hierarchy, the majestic conception of Catholic unity and Catholic perpetuity; they attached absolute importance to the rites, outward works and visible acts through which piety is manifested. Almost all the Germanic nations, on the contrary, became Protestants. If Belgium, which inclined to the Reformation, escaped, it was owing to force through the successes of Farnese, the destruction and flight of so many Protestant families, and to a special moral crisis which you will find in the history of Rubens. All other Germanic peoples subordinated outward to inward worship. They made salvation to consist of a renewal of the heart and of religious sentiment; they made the formal authority of the Church yield to personal convictions; through this predominance of the fundamental form became accessory, worship, daily life and rites being modified in the same degree. We shall soon see that in the arts the same opposition of instincts produced an analogous contrast of taste and style. Meanwhile let it suffice for us to seize the cardinal points which

distinguish the two races. If the latter, compared with the former, presents a less sculpturesque form, grosser appetites and a more torpid temperament, it furnishes through tranquillity of nerve and coolness of blood a stronger hold on pure reason; its mind, less diverted from the right road by delight in sensuous attractions, the impetuosities of impulse and the illusions of external beauty, is better able to accommodate itself now to comprehend things and now to direct them.

II.

This race, thus endowed, has received various imprints, according to the various conditions of its abiding-place. Sow a number of seeds of the same vegetable species in different soils, under various temperatures, and let them germinate, grow, bear fruit and reproduce themselves indefinitely, each on its own soil, and each will adapt itself to its soil, producing several varieties of the same species so much the more distinct as the contrast is greater between the diverse climates. Such is the experience of the Germanic race in the Netherlands. Ten centuries of habitation have done their work; the end of the middle ages shows us that, in addition to its innate character, there is an acquired character.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to study the soil and the sky; in default of travel take the next best thing, a map. Excepting the mountainous district to the south-east, the Netherlands consist of a watery plain, formed out of the deposits of three large rivers —the Rhine, the Meuse and the Scheldt, besides sev-

eral smaller streams. Add to this numerous inlets, ponds and marshes. The country is an outflow of mighty waters, which, as they reach it, become sluggish and remain stagnant for want of a fall. Dig a hole anywhere and water comes. Examine the landscapes of Van der Neer and you will obtain some idea of the vast sluggish streams which, on approaching the sea, become a league wide, and lie asleep, wallowing in their beds like some huge, flat, slimy fish, turbid and feebly glimmering with scaly reflections. The plain is oftentimes below their level, and is only protected by levées of earth. You feel as if some of them were going to give way; a mist is constantly rising from their surfaces, and at night a dense fog envelopes all things in a bluish humidity. Follow them down to the sea, and here a second and more violent inundation, arising from the daily tides, completes the work of the first. The northern ocean is hostile to man. Look at the "Estacade" of Ruysdael, and imagine the frequent tempests casting up ruddy waves and monstrous foaming billows on the low, flat band of earth already half submerged by the enlargement of the rivers. A belt of islands, some of them

equal to the half of a department, indicates, along the coast, this choking up of inland currents and the assaults of the sea—Walcheren, North and South Beveland, Tholen, Schouwen, Voorn, Beierland, Texel, Vlieland and others. Sometimes the ocean runs up and forms inner seas like that of Harlem, or deep gulfs like the Zuyder Zee. If Belgium is an alluvial expanse, formed by the rivers, Holland is simply a deposit of mud surrounded by water. Add to all this an unpropitious soil and a rigorous climate, and you are tempted to conclude that the country was not made for man but for storks and beavers.

When the first Germanic tribes came to encamp here it was still worse. In the time of Cæsar and Strabo there was nothing but a swampy forest; travellers narrate that one could pass from tree to tree over all Holland without touching the ground. The uprooted oaks falling into the streams formed rafts, as nowadays on the Mississippi, and barred the way to the Roman flotillas. The Waal, the Meuse and the Scheldt annually overflowed their banks, the water covering the flat country around to

a great distance. Autumnal tempests every year submerged the island of Batavia, while in Holland the line of the coast changed constantly. Rain fell incessantly, and the fog was as impenetrable as in Russian America; daylight lasted only three or four hours. A solid coating of ice annually covered the Rhine. Civilization, meanwhile, as the soil became cleared, tempered the climate; the rude Holland of that day possessed the climate of Norway. Flanders, four centuries after the invasion, was still called "the interminable and merciless forest." In 1197 the country about Waes, now a garden, remained untilled, the monks on it being besieged by wolves. In the fourteenth century droves of wild horses roamed through the forests of Holland. The sea encroached on the land. Ghent was a seaport in the ninth century, Thorout, St. Omer and Bruges in the twelfth century, Damme in the thirteenth, and Ecloo in the fourteenth. On looking at the Holland of old maps we no longer recognize it.* Still, at the present day its inhabitants are obliged to guard the soil against the

* Michiels, "Histoire de la Peinture Flamande," Vol. I., p. 230; and Schayes' "Les Pays-Bas avant et pendant la domination Romaine."

rivers and the sea. In Belgium the margin of the sea is below the level of the water at high tide, the polders or low spots thus reclaimed displaying vast argillaceous flats, with a slimy soil tinged with purple reflections, between dykes, which, even in our days, sometimes break away. The danger in Holland is still greater, life there seeming to be very precarious. For thirteen centuries a great inundation has taken place, on an average, every seven years, besides smaller ones; one hundred thousand persons were drowned in 1230, eighty thousand in 1287, twenty thousand in 1470, thirty thousand in 1570, and twelve thousand in 1717. Similar disasters occurred in 1776, in 1808, and still later in 1825. Dollart Bay, about seven miles wide by twenty deep, and the Zuyder Zee, forty-four leagues square, are invasions of the sea in the thirteenth century. In order to protect Friesland it was necessary to drive three rows of piles a distance of twenty-two leagues, each pile costing seven florins. To protect the coast of Harlem they had to build a dyke of Norway granite five miles long by forty feet in height, and which is buried two hundred feet beneath the waves. Am

sterdam, which has two hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, is entirely built on piles, frequently thirty feet long. The foundations of every town and village in Friesland are artificial constructions. It is estimated that seven and a half billions of francs have been expended on protective works between the Scheldt and the Dollart. Life has to be purchased in Holland. And when from Harlem or Amsterdam you see the enormous yellow surf beating against that narrow strip of mud, and enclosing it as far as the eye can reach, it is evident that man, in casting this sop to the monster, obtains safety at a low rate.*

Imagine, now, on this quagmire, the ancient Germanic tribes, so many fishers and hunters roaming about in hide boats and clad in seal-skin tunics, and estimate if you can the effort those barbarians were forced to make in order to create a habitable soil and transform themselves into a civilized people. Men of another stamp would not have succeeded; the *milieu* was too unfavorable. In analogous conditions the inferior races of Canada and Russian

* See Alphonse Esquiros' "La Néerlande et la Vie Neérlandaise." 2 vols.

America have remained savage; other well-endowed races, the Celts of Ireland and the Highland Scotch, attained only to a chivalric standard of society and poetic legends. Here there had to be good, sound heads, a capacity to subject sensation to thought, to patiently endure ennui and fatigue, to accept privation and labor in view of a remote end, in short a Germanic race, meaning by this men organized to co-operate together, to toil, to struggle, to begin over and over again and ameliorate unceasingly, to dike streams, to oppose tides, to drain the soil, to turn wind, water, flats, and argillaceous mud to account, to build canals, ships and mills, to make brick, raise cattle, and organize various manufacturing and commercial enterprises. The difficulty being very great the mind was absorbed in overcoming it, and, turned wholly in this direction, was diverted from other things. To subsist, to obtain shelter, food and raiment, to protect themselves against cold and damp, to accumulate stores and lay up wealth left the settlers no time to think of other matters; the mind got to be wholly positive and practical. It is impossible in such a country to

indulge in revery, to philosophize German fashion, to stray off amidst chimeras of the fancy and through the world of metaphysical systems.* One is immediately brought back to the earth. The necessity of action is too universal, too urgent, too constant; if people think at all, it is to act. Under this steady pressure the character forms; that which was habit becomes instinct; the form acquired by the parent is found hereditary in the child; laborer, artisan, trader, factor, householder, man of common sense and nothing more, he is by birth and without effort what his ancestors got to be through necessity and constraint.†

This positive spirit, moreover, is found to be tranquillized. Compared with other nations of the same stock and with a genius no less practical, the denizen of the Netherlands appears better balanced and more capable of being content. We do not see in him the violent passions, the militant disposition, the overstrained will, the bull-dog instincts, the sombre and

* Alfred Michiels' "Histoire de la Peinture," Vol. I., p. 233. This volume contains a number of general views all deserving of attention.

† Prosper Lucas' "De l'Hérédité," and Darwin's "Origin of Species."

grandiose pride which three permanent conquests and the secular establishment of political strife have implanted in the English; nor that restless and exaggerated desire for action which a dry atmosphere, sudden changes from heat to cold, a surplus electricity, have implanted in the Americans of the United States. He lives in a moist and equable climate, one which relaxes the nerves and developes the lymphatic temperament, which moderates the insurrections, explosions and impetuosity of the spirit, soothing the asperities of passion and diverting the character to the side of sensuality and good humor. You have already observed this effect of climate in our comparisons of the genius and the art of the Venetians with those of the Florentines. Here, moreover, events come to the aid of climate, history laboring in the same direction as physiology. The natives of these countries have not undergone, like their neighbors over the channel, two or three invasions, the overrunning of an entire people, Saxons, Danes and Normans installed on their premises; they have not garnered a heritage of hatred which oppression, resistance, rancor, prolonged struggle,

warfare—at first open and violent, and afterwards subdued and legal—transmit from one generation to another. From the earliest times down we find them engaged, as in the age of Pliny, in making salt, "combined together, according to ancient usage, in bringing under cultivation marshy grounds,"* free in their guilds, asserting their independence, claiming their rights and immemorial privileges, devoted to whaling, trade and manufacturing, calling their towns *ports*, in brief, as Guiccardini describes them in the sixteenth century, "very desirous of gain and watchful of profit, but without anything feverish or irrational in their desire to provide for themselves. They are by nature cool and self-possessed. They delight in wealth and other worldly things prudently and as occasion offers, and are not easily disturbed, which is at once apparent both in their discourse and in their physiognomies. They are not prone to anger or to pride, but live together on good terms, and are especially of a gay and lively humor." According to him they entertain no vast and overweening ambi-

* Moke's "Mœurs et Usages des Belges," pp. 111, 113. A capitulary of the ninth century.

tion; many of them retire from business early, amusing themselves with building, and taking life easily and pleasantly. All circumstances, moral and physical, their geographical and political state, the past and the present, combine to one end, namely, the development of one faculty and one tendency at the expense of the rest, shrewd management and temperate emotions, a practical understanding and limited desires; they comprehend the amelioration of outward things, and, this accomplished, they crave no more.

Consider, in effect, their work; its perfection and lacunæ indicate at once the limits and the power of their intellect. The profound philosophy which is so natural in Germany, and the elevated poetry which flourishes in England, they lack. They fail to overlook material things and positive interests in order to yield to pure speculation, to follow the temerities of logic, to attenuate the delicacy of analysis, and bury themselves in the depths of abstraction. They ignore that spiritual turmoil, those eruptions of suppressed feeling which give to style a tragic accent, and that vagabond fancy, those exquisite

and sublime reveries which outside of life's vulgarities reveal a new universe. They can boast of no great philosopher; their Spinoza is a Jew, a pupil of Descartes and the rabbis, an isolated recluse of a different genius and a different race. None of their books have become European like those of Burns and Camoens, who, nevertheless, were born out of nations equally small. One only of their authors has been read by every man of his epoch, Erasmus, a refined writer but who wrote in Latin, and who, in education, taste, style and ideas belongs to the erudites and humanists of Italy. The old Dutch poets, as for example, Jacob Cats, are grave, sensible, somewhat tedious moralists, who laud home enjoyments and the life of the family. The Flemish poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries tell their auditors that they do not recount chivalric fables—but veritable histories, their poesy ending in practical maxims and contemporary events. In vain do their belle-lettre academies cultivate and make poetry prominent, there being no talent to produce out of such resources any great or beautiful performance. Chroniclers arise like Châtelain, and pam

phleteers like Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, but their unctuous narratives are inflated; their overcharged eloquence, coarse and crude, recalls, without equalling it, the rude color and vigorous grossness of their national art. They have scarcely any literature at the present day. Their only novelist, Conscience, seems to us, although a tolerable observer, dull and unrefined. If we visit their country and read their journals, those at least not got up in Paris, we seem to have fallen upon the provinces, and even lower. Polemical discussions are gross, the flowers of rhetoric stale, humor rudely indulged, and wit pointless; a coarse joviality and a coarse anger supply the material; their very caricatures seem to us stupid. If we attempt to ascertain their contributions to the great edifice of modern thought we find that patiently and methodically, like honest and faithful workmen, they have hewn out a few blocks. They can point to a learned school of philologists at Leyden, to jurisprudential authorities like Grotius, to naturalists and physicians like Leeuvenhoeck, Swammerdam and Boerhaave, to physicists like Huyghens, and to cosmographers like Ortelius and

Mercator, in short, to a contingent of specialist and useful men, but to no creative intellect disclosing to the world grand original ideas or enshrining original conceptions in beautiful forms capable of universal ascendancy. They have left to neighboring nations the part filled by the contemplative Mary at the feet of Jesus, choosing for themselves that of Martha; in the seventeenth century they provided pulpits for the Protestant erudites exiled from France, a country for free thought persecuted throughout Europe, and editors for all books of science and polemics; at a later period they furnished printers for the whole of our eighteenth century philosophy, and finally booksellers, brokers and counterfeiters for the entire literature of modern times. All this is of service to them for they are versed in languages, and read and are instructed, instruction being an acquisition and something which it is good to lay up like other things. But there they stop, and neither their ancient nor their modern works show any need of or faculty for contemplating the abstract beyond the apparent world and the imaginary world outside of reality.

On the contrary they have always excelled and they still excel in the arts called useful. "First among transalpine people," says Guiccardini, "they invented woolen fabrics." Up to 1404 they alone were capable of weaving and manufacturing them. England supplied them with the raw material, the English doing no more than raise and shear the sheep. At the end of the sixteenth century, an unique thing in Europe, "almost everybody, even the peasantry, could read and write; a great many even acquired the principles of grammar." We find, accordingly, belle-lettre academies, that is to say associations for oratory and dramatic representations, even in the small towns. This indicates the degree of perfection to which they brought their civilization. "They have," says Guiccardini, "a special and happy talent for the ready invention of all sorts of machines, ingenious and suitable for facilitating, shortening and dispatching everything they do, even in the matter of cooking." They, indeed, with the Italians, are the first in Europe to attain to prosperity, wealth, security, liberty, comfort, and all other benefits which seem to us the

paraphernalia of modern times. In the thirteenth century Bruges was equal to Venice; in the sixteenth century Antwerp was the industrial and commercial capital of the North. Guiccardini never wearies in praising it, and he only saw it when it was in full decline, reconquered by the Duke of Parma after the terrible siege of 1585. In the seventeenth century Holland, remaining free, occupies for a century the place which England now holds in the world of to-day. It is in vain for Flanders to fall back into Spanish hands, to be ravaged by the wars of Louis XIV., to be surrendered to Austria, to serve as a battle-ground for the wars of the Revolution; she never descends to the level of Spain or Italy; the partial prosperity she maintains throughout the miseries of repeated invasion and under a bungling despotism shows the energy of her inspiring good sense and the fecundity of her assiduous labor.

Of all the countries of Europe at the present day Belgium is the one which with an equal area supports the most inhabitants; she feeds twice as many as France; the most populous of our departments,

that of the North, is a portion which Louis XIV detached from her. Towards Lille and Douai you already see spread out in an indefinable circle, extending up to the horizon, this great kitchen garden, a deep and fertile soil diapered with pale grain sheaves, poppy-fields, and the large-leaved beet, and richly stimulated by a low, warm sky swimming with vapor. Between Brussels and Malines begins the broad prairie, here and there striped with rows of poplars, intersected with water-courses and fences, where cattle browse throughout the year, an inexhaustible storehouse of hay, milk, cheese and meat. In the environs of Ghent and Bruges, the land of Waes, "the classic soil of agriculture," is nourished by fertilizers gathered in all countries, and by barnyard manure brought from Zealand. Holland, in like manner, is simply a pasturage, a natural tillage, which, instead of exhausting the soil, renews it, providing its cultivators with the amplest crops, and affording to the consumer the most strengthening aliments. In Holland, at Buicksloot, there are millionaire cow-herds, the Netherlands ever seeming to the stranger to be a land of feasting and good

cheer. If you turn from agricultural to industrial results, you will everywhere encounter the same art of utilizing and making the best of things. Obstacles with them are transformed into aids. The soil was flat and soaked with water; they took advantage of it to cover it with canals and railroads, no place in Europe presenting so many channels of communication and of transport. They were in want of fuel; they dug down into the bowels of the earth, the coal-pits of Belgium being as rich as those of England. The rivers annoyed them with their inundations and inland pools deprived them of a portion of their territory; they drained the pools, diked the streams, and profited by the rich alluvions and the slow deposits of vegetable mould with which the surplus or stagnant waters overspread their land. Their canals freeze up; they take skates and travel in winter five leagues an hour. The sea threatened them; after forcing it back, they avail themselves of it to traffic with all nations. The winds sweep unimpeded across their flat country and over the turbulent ocean; they make them swell the sails of their vessels and move the wings of their windmills. In

Holland you will observe at every turn of the road one of these enormous structures, a hundred feet high, furnished with machinery and pumps, busy in emptying the overflow of water, sawing ship-timber and manufacturing oil. From the steamer, in front of Amsterdam, you see, stretching off as far as the eye can reach, an infinite spider's web, a light, indistinct and complex fringe of masts and arms of windmills encircling the horizon with their innumerable fibres. The impression you carry away is that of a country transformed from end to end by the hand and the art of man, and sometimes entirely created until it becomes a comfortable and productive territory.

Let us go further; let us take a near view of man, and appreciate the most important object belonging to him—his habitation. There is no stone in this country—nothing but an adhesive clay, suitable for men and horses to mire their feet in. It occurred to the people, however, to bake it, and in this way brick and tile, which are the best of defences against humidity, came into their hands. You see well contrived buildings of an agreeable aspect, with red

brown and rosy walls covered with a bright stucco white façades varnished and sometimes decorated with sculptured flowers, animals, medallions and small columns. In the older cities the house often stands with its gable to the street, festooned with arcades, branchings and leafage, which terminate in a bird, an apple or a bust; it is not, as in our cities, a continuation of its neighbor—an abstract compartment of vast barracks, but an object apart, endowed with a special and private character, at once interesting and picturesque. Nothing could be better kept and cleaner. At Douai the poorest have their domicile whitewashed once a year, outside and in, it being necessary to engage the whitewasher six months in advance. At Antwerp, in Ghent and in Bruges, and especially in the small towns, most of the façades seem to be newly painted or freshened the day before. Washing and sweeping are going on on all sides. When you reach Holland there is extra care even to exaggeration. You see domestics at five o'clock in the morning scrubbing the sidewalks. In the environs of Amsterdam the villages seem to be scenery

from the Opera-Comique, so tidy and so well-dusted are they. There are stables for cows, the flooring of which is cabinet work; you can enter them only in slippers or sabots placed at the entrance for that purpose; a spot of dirt would be scandalous, and still more so any odor; the cows' tails are held up by a small cord to prevent them from soiling themselves. Vehicles are prohibited from entering the village; the sidewalks of brick and blue porcelain are more irreproachable than a vestibule with us. In autumn children come and gather up the fallen leaves in the streets to deposit them in a pit. Everywhere, in the small rooms, seemingly the state-rooms of a ship, the order and arrangement are the same as on a ship. In Broeck, it is said, there is in each house a particular room which is entered only once a week in order to clean and rub the furniture, and then carefully closed; in a country so damp, dirt immediately becomes a deleterious mould; man, compelled to scrupulous cleanliness, contracts the habit, experiences its necessity, and at last falls under its tyranny. You would be pleased, however, to see the humblest shop of

the smallest street in Amsterdam, with its brown casks, its immaculate counter, its scoured benches, everything in its place, the economy of small quarters, the intelligent and handy arrangement of all utensils. Guiccardini already remarks "that their houses and clothes are clean, handsome and well-arranged, that they have much furniture, utensils and domestic objects, kept in better order and with a finer lustre than in any other country." It is necessary to see the comfort of their apartments, especially the houses of the middle classes—carpets, waxed cloths for the floors, warm and heat-saving chimneys of iron and porcelain, triple curtains at the windows, clear, dark and highly polished window-panes, vases of flowers and green plants, innumerable knick-knacks indicative of sedentary habits and which render home life pleasant, mirrors placed so as to reflect the people passing in the street together with its changing aspects;—every detail shows some inconvenience remedied, some want satisfied, some pleasant contrivance, some thoughtful provision, in short, the universal reign of a sagacious activity and the extreme of comfort.

Man, in effect, is that which his work indicates. Thus endowed and thus situated, he enjoys and knows how to enjoy. The bountiful soil furnishes him with abundant nutriment — meat, fish, vegetables, beer and brandy; he eats and drinks copiously, while in Belgium the Germanic appetite, as it grows in fastidiousness without decreasing, becomes gastronomic sensuality. Cooking there is scientific and perfect, even to the hotel tables; I believe that they are the best in Europe. There is a certain hotel in Mons to which visitors from the small neighboring towns come to dine every Saturday, especially to enjoy a delicate meal. They lack wine, but they import it from Germany and France, and boast the possession of the best vintages: we do not, in their opinion, treat our wines with the respect they deserve; it is necessary to be a Belgian to care for and relish them in a proper manner. There is no important hotel which is not supplied with a varied and select stock; its reputation and custom are made by the selection; in the railroad cars the conversation tends spontaneously to the merits of two rival cellars. A prudent merchant will have twelve thousand bottles in his

sanded cellars, duly classified; it constitutes his library. The burgomaster of a petty Dutch town possesses a cask of genuine Johannisberger, made in the best year, and this cask adds to the consideration of its owner. A man there, who gives a dinner party, knows how to make his wines succeed each other in such a way as not to impair the taste and have as many as possible consumed. As to the pleasures of the ear and the eye, they understand them as well as those of the palate and the stomach. They instinctively love the music which we only appreciate through culture. In the sixteenth century they are first in this art; Guiccardini states that their vocalists and instrumentalists are esteemed in all the courts of Christendom; abroad, their professors found schools, and their compositions are standards of authority. Even nowadays the great musical endowment of being able to sing in parts is encountered even amongst the populace; the coal-miners organize choral societies; I have heard laborers in Brussels and Antwerp, and the ship caulkers and sailors of Amsterdam sing in chorus, and in true time, while at work and in the street on returning home at night.

There is no large Belgian town in which a chime of bells, perched in the belfry, does not every quarter of an hour amuse the artizan in his shop and the trader at his counter with the peculiar harmonies of their sonorous metal. In like manner their city halls, their house-fronts, even their old drinking-cups are, through their complex ornamentation, their intricate lines and their original and often fantastic design, agreeable to the eye. Add to this the free or well-composed tones of the bricks forming the walls, and the richness of the brown and red tints relieving on white displayed on the roofs and façades—assuredly the towns of the Netherlands are as picturesque of their kind as any in Italy. In all times they have delighted in *kermesses* and *fêtes de Gayant*, in corporation processions, and in the parade and glitter of costumes and materials. I shall show you the completely Italian pomp of the civic entries and other ceremonies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are epicureans as well as gourmands in the matter of comfortable living; regularly, calmly, without heat or enthusiasm they glean up every pleasing harmony of savor, sound, color and form

that arises out of their prosperity and abundance, like tulips on a heap of compost. All this produces good sense somewhat limited, and happiness somewhat gross. A Frenchman would soon yawn over it, but he would make a mistake, for this civilization, which seems to him unctuous and vulgar, possesses one sterling merit—it is healthy; the men living here have a gift we lack the most—wisdom, and a compensation we are equally undeserving of—contentment.

III.

Such, in this country, is the human plant; we have now to examine its art, which is the flower. Among all the branches of the Germanic trunk, this plant alone has produced a complete flower: the art which developes so happily and so naturally in the Netherlands proves abortive with the other Germanic nations for the reason that this glorious privilege emanates from the national character as we have just set it forth.

To comprehend and love painting requires an eye sensitive to forms and to colors, and, without education or apprenticeship, one which takes pleasure in the juxtaposition of tones and is delicate in the matter of optical sensations; the man who would be a painter must be capable of losing himself in viewing the rich consonance of red and green, in watching the diminution of light as it is transformed into darkness, and in detecting the subtle hues of silks and satins, which according to their breaks, recesses and depths of fold, assume opaline tints, vague

luminous gleams and imperceptible shades of blue. The eye is epicurean like the palate, and painting is an exquisite feast served up to it. For this reason it is that Germany and England have had no great pictorial art. In Germany the too great domination of abstract ideas has left no room for the sensuousness of the eye. Its early school, that of Cologne, instead of representing bodies, represented mystic, pious and tender souls. In vain did the great German artist of the sixteenth century, Albert Dürer, familiarize himself with the Italian masters; he retains his graceless forms, his angular folds, his ugly nudities, his dull color, his barbarous, gloomy and saddened faces; the wild imagination, the deep religious sentiment and the vague philosophic divinations which shine through his works, show an intellect to which form is inadequate. Examine the infant Christ in the Louvre, by Wohlgemuth, his master, and an Eve, by Lucas Cranach, a contemporary; you will realize that the men who executed such groups and such bodies were born for theology and not for painting. Again at the present day they esteem and enjoy the inward

rather than the outward; Cornelius and the Munich masters regard the idea as principal, and execution as secondary; the master conceives and the pupil paints; the aim of their wholly philosophic and symbolic work is to excite the spectator to reflect on some great moral or social verity. In like manner Overbeck aims at edification and preaches sentimental asceticism; and even Knauss, again, who is such an able psychologist that his pictures form idyls and comedies. As to the English, up to the eighteenth century, they do but little more than import pictures and artists from abroad. Temperament in this country is too militant, the will too stern, the mind too utilitarian, man too case-hardened, too absorbed and too overtasked to linger over and revel in the beautiful and delicate gradations of contours and colors. Their national painter, Hogarth, simply produced moral caricatures. Others, like Wilkie, use their pencil to render sentiments and characteristic traits visible; even in landscape they depict the spiritual element, corporeal objects serving them simply as an index or suggestion; it is even apparent in their

two great landscapists, Constable and Turner, and in their two great portrait painters, Gainsborough and Reynolds. Their coloring of to-day, finally, is shockingly crude, and their drawing literal minutiæ. The Flemings and Hollanders alone have prized forms and colors for their own sake. This sentiment still persists. Proof of this is to be found in the picturesqueness of their towns and in the agreeable aspect of their homes; last year at the Universal Exposition (1867) you could see for yourselves that genuine art—painting exempt from philosophic motive and literary deviation, capable of manipulating form without servility and color without barbarisms—scarcely exists anywhere but with them and with ourselves.

Thanks to this national endowment, in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when circumstances became favorable, they were able to maintain in the face of Italy a great school of painting. But as they were Germans their school fol lowed the German track. What distinguishes their race from classic races is, as you have seen, a pref rence for substance over form, of actual verity to

beautiful externals, of the real, complex, irregular and natural object to the well-ordered, pruned, refined and transformed object. This instinct, of which you remark the ascendancy in their religion and literature, has likewise controlled their art and notably their painting. "The prime significance of the Flemish school," says M. Wäagen, "proceeds from its having, through its freedom from foreign influences, revealed to us the contrast of sentiments of the Greek and the German races, the two columnar capitals of ancient and modern civilization. Whilst the Greeks sought to idealize not merely conceptions taken from the ideal world, but even portraits, by simplifying the forms and accentuating the most important features, the early Flemings on the contrary translated into portraiture the ideal personifications of the Virgin, the apostles, the prophets and the martyrs, ever striving to represent in an exact manner the petty details of nature. Whilst the Greeks expressed the details of landscape, rivers, fountains and trees under abstract forms, the Flemings strove to render them precisely as they saw them. In relation to the ideal and the tendency of

the Greeks to personify everything, the Flemings created a realistic school, a school of landscape. In this respect the Germans first and the English afterwards have pursued the same course."* Run over a collection of engravings containing the works of German origin from Albert Dürer, Martin Schongauer, the Van Eycks, Holbein and Lucas of Leyden, down to Rubens, Rembrandt, Paul Potter, Jan Steen and Hogarth; if your imagination is filled with noble Italian or with elegant French forms, your eyes will be offended; you will experience some difficulty in taking the proper standpoint; you will often fancy that the artist purposely studied the ugly. The truth is he is not repelled by the trivialities and deformities of life. He does not naturally enter into the symmetrical composition, the tranquil and easy action, the beautiful proportions, the healthiness and agility of the naked figure. When the Flemings in the sixteenth century resorted to the Italian school, they only succeeded in spoiling their original style. During seventy years of patient imitation they brought forth nothing but hybrid abortions. This

* "Manuel de l'historie de la Peinture," Vol. 1, p. 79.

long period of failure, placed between two long periods of superiority, shows the limits and the power of their original aptitudes. They were incapable of simplifying nature; they aimed to reproduce her entire. They did not concentrate her in the nude body; they assigned equal importance to all her appearances—landscapes, edifices, animals, costumes and accessories.* They are not qualified to comprehend and prize the ideal body; they are constituted to paint and enforce the actual body.

Allowing this, we easily discern in what particulars they differ from other masters of the same race. I have described to you their national genius, so sensible and so well-balanced, exempt from lofty aspiration, limited to the present and disposed to enjoyment. Such artists will not create the melan-

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* In this respect the verdict of Michael Angelo is very instructive. "In Flanders," he says, "they prefer to paint what are called landscapes and many figures scattered here and there. . . . . There is neither art nor reason in this, no proportion, no symmetry, no careful selection, no grandeur. . . . . If I speak so ill of Flemish painting it is not because it is wholly bad, but because it seeks to render in perfection so many objects of which one alone, through its importance, would suffice, and none is produced in a satisfactory manner." We here recognize the classic and simplifying trait of Italian genius.

choly beings in painful abstraction, weighed down with the burden of life and obstinately resigned, of Albert Dürer. They will not devote themselves like the mystic painters of Cologne, or the moralist painters of England, to the representation of spiritual traits and characters; little will they concern themselves with the disproportion between mind and matter. In a fertile and luxurious country, amidst jovial customs, in the presence of placid, honest and blooming faces they are to obtain the models suited to their genius. They almost always paint man in a well-to-do condition and content with his lot. When they exalt him it is without raising him above his terrestrial condition. The Flemish school of the seventeenth century does no more than expand his appetite, his lusts, his energy and his gayety. Generally they leave him as he is. The Dutch school confines itself to reproducing the repose of the bourgeois interior, the comforts of shop and farm, out-door sports and tavern enjoyments, all the petty satisfactions of an orderly and tranquil existence. Nothing could be better adapted to painting; too much thought and em-

tion is detrimental to it. Subjects of this order conceived in such a spirit, furnish works of a rare harmony; the Greeks alone, and a few great Italian artists have set us the example; the painters of the Netherlands on a lower stage do as they did, they represent man to us complete of his type, adapted to things around him and therefore happy without effort.

One point remains to be considered. One of the leading merits of this art is the excellence and delicacy of its coloring. This is owing to the education of the eye, which in Flanders and in Holland is peculiar. The country is a saturated delta like that of the Po, while Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hague and Utrecht, through their rivers, canals, sea and atmosphere resemble Venice. Here, as at Venice, nature has made man colorist. Observe the different aspect of things according as you are in a dry country like Provençe and the neighborhood of Florence, or on a wet plain like the Netherlands. In the dry country the line predominates, and at once attracts attention; the mountains cut sharp against the sky, with their stories of architec-

ture of a grand and noble style, all objects projecting upward in the limpid air in varied prominence. Here the low horizon is without interest, and the contours of objects are softened, blended and blurred out by the imperceptible vapor with which the atmosphere is always filled; that which predominates is the spot. A cow pasturing, a roof in the centre of a field, a man leaning on a parapet appear as one tone among other tones The object emerges; it does not start suddenly out of its surroundings as if punched out; you are struck by its modelling, that is to say by the different degrees of advancing luminousness and the diverse gradations of melting color which transforms its general tint into a relief and gives to the eye a sensation of thickness.* You

* W. Burger's "Musées de la Hollande," p. 206: "Modelling, and not lines, is what always impresses you in the beauty of the North. Form, in the North, does not declare itself by contour, but by relief. Nature, in expressing herself, does not avail herself of drawing, properly so called. Walk about an Italian town for an hour, and you will encounter women accurately defined, whose general structure brings to mind Greek statuary, and whose profile recalls Greek cameos. You might pass a year in Antwerp without finding a single form suggesting the idea of translating it by a contour, but simply by saliencies, which color only can model. . . . . Objects never present themselves as silhouettes, but, so to say in full shape."

would have to pass many days in this country in order to appreciate this subordination of the line to the spot. A bluish or gray vapor is constantly rising from the canals, the rivers, the sea, and from the saturated soil; a universal haze forms a soft gauze over objects, even in the finest weather. Flying scuds, like thin, half-torn white drapery, float over the meadows night and morning. I have repeatedly stood on the quays of the Scheldt contemplating the broad, pallid and slightly rippled water, on which float the dark hulks. The river shines, and on its flat surface the hazy light reflects here and there unsteady scintillations. Clouds ascend constantly around the horizon, their pale, leaden hue and their motionless files suggesting an army of spectres, the spectres of the humid soil, like so many phantoms, always revived and bringing back the eternal show ers. Towards the setting sun they become ruddy, while their corpulent masses, trellissed all over with gold, remind one of the damascene copes, the brocaded simarres and the embroidered silks with which Jordaens and Rubens envelope their bleeding martyrs and their sorrowful madonnas. Quite low down

on the sky the sun seems an enormous blaze subsiding into smoke. On reaching Amsterdam or Ostend the impression again deepens; both sea and sky have no form; the fog and interposed showers leave nothing to remember but colors. The water changes in hue every half hour—now of a pale wine tinge, now of a chalky whiteness, now yellow like softened mortar, now black like liquid soot, and sometimes of a sombre purple striped with dashes of green. After a few days' experience you find that, in such a nature only gradations, contrasts and harmonies, in short, the value of tones is of any importance.

These tones, moreover, are full and rich. A dry country is of a dull aspect; southern France and the whole of the mountainous portion of Italy leave on the eye no sensation but that of a gray and yellow checker-board. Besides this, all the tones of the soil and of buildings are lost in the preponderating splendor of the sky and the all-pervading luminousness of the atmosphere. In truth, a southern city, and a Provençe or Tuscan landscape are simply drawings; with white paper, charcoal, and the feeble tints of colored crayons you can express

the whole thing. On the contrary, in a country of humidity like the Netherlands, the earth is green, a quantity of lively spots diversifying the uniformity of the wide prairie—sometimes it is the dark or brown color of the wet mould, again the deep red of tiles and bricks, again the white or rosy coating of the façades, again the ruddy spots of reclining cattle, again the flickering sheen of canals and streams. And these spots are not subdued by the too powerful light of the sky. Contrary to the dry country it is not the sky but the earth which has a preponderating influence. In Holland especially, for several months, "there is no transparency of atmosphere; a kind of opaque vail hovering between sky and ground intercepts all radiance. In winter darkness seems to come from above."* The rich colors, accordingly, with which all terrestrial objects are clothed, remain unrivalled. To their strength must be added their gradation and their mobility. In Italy a tone remains fixed; the steady light of the sky maintains it so for many hours, and as it was yesterday so it will be to-morrow. Return to it and

* W. Burger's "Musées de la Hollande," p. 213.

you will find it the same as you placed it on your palette a month before. In Flanders it varies incessantly along with the variations of light and the ambient vapor. Here again, I should like to take you into the country and let you appreciate yourselves the original beauty of the towns and the landscape. The red of the bricks, the lustrous white of the façades are agreeable to the eye because they are softened by the grayish atmosphere; against the neutral background of the sky extend rows of peaked, shell-like roofs, all of deep brown, here and there a gothic gutter, or some gigantic belfry covered with elaborate finials and heraldic animals. Frequently the crenelated cornice of chimney and of ridge is reflected as it glows in a canal or in an arm of the sea. Outside the cities, as within them, all is material for pictures—you have nothing to do but to copy. The universal green of the country is neither crude nor monotonous; it is tinted by diverse degrees of maturity of foliage and herbage and by the various densities and perpetual changes of haziness and clouds. It has for complement or for relief the blackness of clouds which suddenly melt away

in transient showers, the grayness of scattered and ragged banks of fog, the vague, bluish network enveloping distances, the sparkling of flickering light arrested in flying scuds—sometimes the dazzling satin of a motionless cloud, or some abrupt opening through which the azure penetrates. A sky which is thus filled up, thus mobile, thus adapted to harmonizing, varying and emphasizing the tones of the earth, affords a colorist school. Here, as at Venice, art has followed nature, the hand having been forcibly guided by optical sensations.

If, however, the analogies of climate have endowed the Venetian eye and that of the inhabitant of the Netherlands with an analogous education, differences of climate have given them a different education. The Netherlands are situated three hundred leagues to the north of Venice. The atmosphere there is colder, rains more frequent, and the sun the oftenest concealed. Hence a natural gamut of colors, which has provoked a corresponding artificial gamut. A full light being rare, objects do not reflect the imprint of the sun. You do not meet with those golden tones, that magnificent ruddiness so frequent in the

monuments of Italy. The water is not of that deep sea-green resembling silkiness, as in the lagoons of Venice. The fields and trees have not that solid and vigorous tone visible in the verdure of Verona and Padua. The herbage is pale and softened, the water dull or dark, the flesh white, now pink like a flower grown in the shade, now rubicund after exposure to the weather and rendered coarse by food, generally yellow and flabby, sometimes, in Holland, pallid and inanimate and of a waxy tone. The tissues of the living organism, whether man, animal or plant, imbibe too much fluid, and lack the ripening power of sunshine. This is why, if we compare the two schools of painting, we find a difference in the general tone. Examine, in any gallery, the Venetian school, and afterwards the Flemish school; pass from Canaletto and Guardi to Ruysdael, Paul Potter, Hobbema, Adrian Van der Velde, Teniers and Ostade; from Titian and Veronese to Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt, and consult your optical impressions. On going from the former to the latter, color loses a portion of its warmth. Shadowed, ruddy and autumnal tones disappear; you see the fiery furnace envelop-

ing the Assumptions going out; flesh becomes of the whiteness of milk or snow, the deep purple of draperies grows lighter, and paler silks have cooler reflections. The intense brown which faintly impregnates foliage, the powerful reds gilding sunlit distances, the tones of veined marble, amethyst and sapphire with which water is resplendent, all decline, in order to give place to the deadened whiteness of expanded vapor, the bluish glow of misty twilight, the slaty reflections of the ocean, the turbid hue of rivers, the pallid verdure of the fields, and the grayish atmosphere of household interiors.

Between these new tones there is established a new harmony. Sometimes a full light falls upon objects, and to which they are not accustomed; the green campagna, the red roofs, the polished façades and the satiny flesh flushed with blood show extraordinary brilliancy. They are adapted to the subdued light of a northerly and humid country; they have not been transformed as at Venice by the slow scorching of the sun; beneath this irruption of luminousness their tones become too vivid, almost crude; they vibrate together like the blasts of trumpets,

leaving on the mind and senses an impression of energetic and boisterous joyousness. Such is the coloring of the Flemish painters who love the full light of day. Rubens furnishes us with the best example; if his restored canvasses in the Louvre represent his work to us as it left his hands, it is certain that he did not discipline his eyes; in any event his color lacks the rich and mellow harmony of the Venetian; the greatest extremes meet; the snowy whiteness of flesh, the sanguine red of the draperies, the dazzling lustre of silks have their full force and are not united, tempered and enveloped, as at Venice, in that amber tint which prevents contrasts from being discordant and effects from being too startling. Sometimes, on the contrary, the light is feeble or nearly gone, which is commonly the case, and especially in Holland. Objects issue painfully out of shadow; they are almost lost in their surroundings; at evening, in a cellar, beneath a lamp, in an apartment into which a dying ray from a window glides, they are effaced and seem to be only more intense darks in a universal duskiness. The eye is led to noticing these gradations of obscurity, this vague

train of light mingling with shadow, the remains of brightness clinging to the lingering lustre of the furniture, a reflection from a greenish window-sash, a piece of embroidery, a pearl, some golden spark astray upon a necklace. Having become sensitive to these delicacies, the painter, instead of uniting the extremes of the gamut, simply selects the beginning of it; his entire picture, except in one point, is in shadow; the concert he offers us is a continuous sordine in which now and then occurs some brilliant passage. He thus discloses unknown harmonies, those of chiaroscuro, those of modeling, those of emotion, all of them infinite and penetrating; using a daub of dirty yellow, or of wine lees, or a mixed gray, or vague darks, here and there accentuated by a vivid spot, he succeeds in stirring the very depths of our nature. Herein consists the last great picturesque creation; it is through this that painting nowadays most powerfully addresses the modern mind, and this is the coloring with which the light of Holland supplied the genius of Rembrandt.

You have seen the seed, the plant and the flower. A race with a genius totally opposed to that of the

Latin peoples makes for itself, after and alongside of them its place in the world. Among the numerous nations of this race, one there is in which a special territory and climate develope a particular character predisposing it to art and to a certain phase of art. Painting is born with it, lasts, becomes complete, and the physical *milieu* surrounding it, like the national genius which founds it, give to and impose upon it its subjects, its types and its coloring. Such are the remote preparatives, the profound causes, the general conditions which have nourished this sap, directed this vegetation, and produced the final efflorescence. It only remains to us now to expose historical events, the diversity and succession of which have brought about the successive and diverse phases of the great flowering epoch.

PART II.

HISTORIC EPOCHS.

I.

We find four distinct periods in the pictorial art of the Netherlands, and, through a remarkable coincidence, each corresponds to a distinct historic period. Here, as everywhere, art translates life; the talent and taste of the painter change at the same time and in the same sense as the habits and sentiments of the public. Just as each profound geological revolution brings with it its own fauna and flora, so does each great transformation of society and intellect bring with it its ideal figures. In this respect our galleries of art resemble museums, the imaginary creations they contain being, like living organisms, both the fruit and the index of their surroundings.

The first period of art lasts about a century and a half, and extends from Hubert Van Eyck to Quintin Matsys (1400–1530). It issues from a renaissance, that is to say, from a great development of prosperity, wealth and intellect. Here, as in Italy, the cities at an early period are flourishing, and almost free. I have already stated to you that in the thir-

teenth century serfdom was abolished in Flanders, and that the guilds to manufacture salt "for the purpose of bringing under cultivation marshy grounds," ascend to the Roman epoch. From the seventh and ninth centuries, Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent are "ports," or privileged markets; they carry on commerce on a large scale; they fit out cruisers for the whale fishery; they serve as the entrepôts of the North and the South. Prosperous people, well supplied with arms and provisions, accustomed through association and activity to foresight and enterprise, are better qualified to protect themselves than miserable serfs scattered about in defenceless villages. Their great populous cities with narrow streets, and a saturated soil intersected with deep canals, are not a suitable ground for the cavalry of barons.* Hence it is that the feudal net, so close and so tightly drawn over all Europe, had, in Flanders, to enlarge its meshes. In vain did the Count appeal for aid to his suzerain, the French king, and urge his Burgundian chivalry against the cities; overcome at Mons-en-Puelle, at Cassel, at Rosebecque, at Othée, at

* Battle of Courtenay, 1302.

Gavre, at Brusthem, at Liege, they always recover themselves, and from revolt to revolt preserve the best portion of their liberties, even under the princes of the house of Austria. The fourteenth century is the heroic and tragic epoch of Flanders. She possesses brewers like Arteveldt, who are tribunes, dictators and captains, and who end life on the field of battle or are assassinated; civil war is mixed up with foreign war; people fight from city to city, trade against trade, and man to man; there are fourteen hundred murders in Ghent in one year; the stores of energy are so great that she survives all ills and sustains all efforts. Men seek death twenty thousand at a time, and fall in heaps before lances without giving an inch. "Banish all hope of returning without honor," said the citizens of Ghent to the five thousand volunteers under Philip Van Arteveldt, for "so soon that we hear that you are dead or discomfited we shall fire the city and destroy ourselves with our own hands."* In 1384, in the country of the Four Trades, prisoners refused their lives, declaring that after death their bones would rise up against

* Froissart.

the French. Fifty years later, around rebellious Ghent, the peasantry "chose death rather than ask quarter, declaring that they would perish as martyrs in a fair fight." In these swarming hives an abundance of food and habits of personal activity maintain courage, turbulence, audacity and even insolence, all excesses of brutal and boundless energy; these weavers were men, and when we encounter man we may expect soon to encounter the arts.

An interval of prosperity at this time was sufficient; under this ray of sunshine the flowering thus maturing is perfected. At the end of the fourteenth century Flanders, with Italy, is the most industrious, the wealthiest and most flourishing country in Europe.* In 1370 there are thirty-two hundred woollen factories at Malines and on its territory. One of its merchants carries on an immense trade with Damascus and Alexandria. Another, of Valenciennes, being at Paris during the fair, monopolizes all provisions exposed for sale with a view to display his opulence. Ghent in 1389 has one hundred and eighty-nine thousand men bearing arms; the

* Michiel's "Historie de la Peinture Flamande," Vol. II. p. 3.

drapers alone furnish eighteen thousand men in a revolt; the weavers form twenty-seven sections, and at the sound of the great bell, fifty-two corporations under their own banners rush to the market-place. In 1380 the goldsmiths of Bruges are numerous enough to form in war time an entire division of the army. A little later Œnius Sylvius states that she is one of the three most beautiful cities in the world; a canal four leagues and a half in length joins her to the sea; a hundred vessels a day pass through it. Bruges was then what London is at the present time. Political matters at this period attain to a sort of equilibrium. The Duke of Burgundy finds himself by inheritance, in 1384, sovereign of Flanders. The grandeur of his possessions and the multiplication of civil wars during the minority and madness of Charles VI. divorce him from France; he is no longer, like the ancient counts, a dependant of the king, domiciliated in Paris and soliciting aid to reduce and tax his Flemish merchants. His power and the misfortunes of France render him independent. Although a prince he belongs, in Paris, to the popular party, and the butchers shout

for him. Although a Frenchman his politics are Flemish, and when not in alliance with the English he negotiates with them. In the matter of money he certainly quarrels with his Flemings more than once, and is obliged to kill a good many of them. But to one who is familiar with the disturbances and violence of the middle ages, the order and harmony which is then established seem sufficient; at all events they are greater than ever before. Henceforth, as at Florence about the year 1400, authority becomes recognized and society organized; henceforth, as in Italy about the year 1400, man abandons the ascetic and ecclesiastic regime that he may interest himself in nature and enjoy life. The ancient compression is relaxed; he begins to prize strength, health, beauty and pleasure. On all sides we see the mediæval spirit undergoing change and disintegration. An elegant and refined architecture converts stone into lace, festooning churches with pinnacles, trefoils and intricate mullions, and in such a fashion that the honey-combed, gilded and flowering edifice becomes a vast and romantic casket, a product of fancy rather than of faith, less calculated to excite

piety than wonder. In like manner chivalry becomes a mere parade. The nobles frequent the Valois court, devote themselves to pleasure, to "pretty conceits" and especially to the "conceits of love." In Chaucer and in Froissart we are spectators of their pomp — their tourneys, their processions and their banquets, of the new reign of frivolity and fashion, of the creations of an infatuated and licentious imagination, of their extravagant and overcharged costumes—robes twelve ells long, tight hose and Bohemian jackets with sleeves falling to the ground, shoes terminating in the claws, horns and tail of the scorpion, suits embroidered with letters, animals, and with musical notes enabling one to read and sing a song on the owner's back, hoods adorned with golden garlands and with animals, robes covered with sapphires, rubies and jewelled swallows, each holding in its beak a golden cup; one costume has fourteen hundred of these cups, and we find nine hundred and sixty pearls used in embroidering a song on a coat. Women in magnificently ornamented veils, the breast nude, the head crowned with huge cones and crescents, and dressed in gaudy robes covered

with the figures of unicorns, lions and savages, place themselves on seats representing small sculptured and gilded cathedrals. The life of the court and of princes seems a carnival. When Charles VI. is knighted a hall is prepared in the abbey of St. Denis, thirty-two toises (about two hundred feet) long, hung in white and green, with a lofty pavilion of tapestry: here, after three days of feasting and jousting, a nocturnal masked ball ends in an orgie. "Many a damsel forgot herself, many were the husbands who suffered," and, in contrast to this, showing the sentiments of the age, they celebrate the funeral of Duguesclin at the end of it. In the accounts and chronicles of the period we follow the course of a broad, golden stream, flowing, glistening, ostentatious and interminable, that is to say, the domestic history of the king and queen and the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy; there is nothing but entries into cities, cavalcades, masks, dances, voluptuous caprices, and the prodigality of the newly enriched. The Burgundian and French chevaliers who go to contend with Bagazet at Nicopolis equip themselves as if for a party of pleasure; their ban-

ners and the trappings of their horses are loaded with gold and silver, their dishes are all of silver plate and their tents are of green satin; exquisite wines follow them in boats on the Danube, and their camps are filled with courtesans. This excess of animal spirits, which, in France, is mingled with morbid curiosity and lugubrious fancies, breaks out in Burgundy into a grand and jolly *kermesse*. Philip the Good has three legitimate wives, twenty-four mistresses, and sixteen bastards; he attends to all, feasting, making merry and admitting the townswomen to his court; seeming at the outset to be one of Jordaens' characters. A Count of Clèves has sixty-three bastards; the chroniclers in their narration of ceremonies constantly and gravely mention those of both sexes; the institution appears to be official: seeing them swarming in this manner, we are reminded of the buxom nurses of Rubens and the Gangamelles of Rabelais. "It was," says a contemporary, "a great pity, this sin of luxury which prevailed far and wide, and especially amongst princes and the wedded. . . He was the gentlest companion who was able to deceive and possess at the

same time more than one woman . . . and even there prevailed likewise the sin of luxury among the prelates of the Church and among all Church people."* Jacques de Croy, archbishop of Cambray, officiated pontifically with his thirty-six bastards and bastards' sons, and kept in reserve a sum of money for those to come. At the third marriage of Philip the Good the gala seems to be a Gamache's wedding commanded by Gargantua; the streets of Bruges were hung with tapestry; for eight days and eight nights a stone lion spurted Rhine wine, while a stone stag discharged Beaune Burgundy; at meal times an unicorn poured forth rosewater or malvoisie. On the entry of the Dauphin into the city, eight hundred merchants of divers nations advanced to meet him, all in garments of silk and velvet. At another ceremonial the duke appears with a saddle and bridle covered with precious stones; "nine pages covered with plumes of jewels" followed behind him,

* "C'était grand' pitié que le péché de luxare qui regnait moult et fort, et par especial esprinces ét gens mariés. Et était le plus gentil compagnon qui plus d'une femme savait tromper et avoir au moment . . . et même regnait icelui péché de luxure es prélats de l'Eglise et en tous gens d'Eglise."

and "one of the said pages bore a salad which was stated to be of the value of one hundred thousand gold crowns." Another time the jewels worn by the duke are estimated at a million. I wish to describe one of these fêtes to you; like those of Florence at the same epoch they bear witness to the picturesque and decorative tastes which here as in Florence produced pictorial art. One of them took place at Lille under Philip the Good, the Festival of the Pheasant, which may be compared with the triumph of Lorenzo de Medici; you will observe here in a hundred naive details the resemblances and the differences of the two societies, and accordingly of their culture, their taste and their art.

The Duke of Clèves had given a "superb banquet" at Lille, at which were present "Monseigneur," (of Burgundy) "together with the lords, ladies and damsels of his house." At this banquet there was seen on the table an "entremets," that is to say, a decoration representing "a ship with lifted sails, in which was a knight erect and armed . . . . and before it a silver swan, bearing on his neck a gold collar, to which hung a long chain, with which the said swan

appeared to draw the vessel, and on the back of the said vessel stood a castle most skilfully contrived." On this allegorical machine the Duke of Clèves, Knight of the Swan, and "slave of the fair," caused proclamation to be made that he might be encountered in the lists, "armed in jousting harness and in war saddle, and that he who should do the best would gain a rich golden swan, chained with a chain of gold, and on the end of this chain a magnificent ruby."

Ten days after this the Count d'Etampes gave the second act of the fairy spectacle. Bear in mind that the second as well as the first act with all the others began with a feast. In this court life is gross, and people never tire of bumpers. "When the 'entremets' were removed there issued from an apartment a multitude of torches, and after these there appeared an armed attendant clad in his coat of mail, and after him two knights clad in long velvet robes furred with sable, with no covering to the head, each one bearing in his hand a gay hood of flowers;" after them, on a palfrey caparisoned in blue silk, "a most beautiful lady appeared, young, of the age of twelve years, attired in a robe of violet silk, richly embroi-

dered and padded with gold," she is "the princess of joy." Three squires clothed in vermilion silk lead her up to the duke, singing a song as they introduce her. She descends, and kneeling on the table she places on his brow a crown of flowers. At this moment the joust is proclaimed, the drums beat, a pursuivant-at-arms appears in a mailed suit covered with swans, and then enters the Duke of Clèves, Knight of the Swan, richly armed, seated on a horse caparisoned in white damask and fringed with gold; he leads by a gold chain a large swan accompanied by two mounted archers; behind him march children on horseback, grooms, knights armed with lances, all, like himself, in white damask fringed with gold. Toison d'Or, the herald, presents them to the duchess. The other knights then defile before her on their horses, decked with gray and crimson cloth of gold, cloth decked with small golden bells, crimson velvet trimmed with sable, violet velvet fringed with gold and silk, and black velvet studded with golden tear-drops. Suppose that the great personages of state of the present day should amuse themselves with dressing up like actors at the opera and in

making passes like circus-riders! The oddity of such a supposition enables you to appreciate the liveliness of the picturesque instinct at that day, as well as the taste for outward display and the feebleness of both at present.

These, however, were only preludes. Eight days after the tourney the Duke of Burgundy gave his festival, which surpassed all the others. A vast hall, hung with tapestry representing the career of Hercules, had five doors, guarded by archers dressed in robes of gray and black cloth. Around the sides extended five platforms or galleries, occupied by foreign spectators, noble personages and ladies, most of these being disguised. In their midst arose "a lofty buffet, loaded with vessels of gold and silver, and crystal vases garnished with gold and precious stones." And erect, in the centre of the hall, stood a great pillar, bearing "a female image with hair falling to her loins, her head covered with a very rich hat, and her breast spouting hypocras so long as the supper lasted." Three gigantic tables were arranged, each one being adorned with several "entremets," so many huge machines reminding one, on a grand

scale, of the toy presents given nowadays to the children of the wealthy. The men of this time, indeed, in curiosity and in flights of the imagination are nothing but children; their strongest desire is to amuse the eye; they sport with life as with a magic lantern. The two principal "entremets" consist of a monstrous pie, containing twenty-eight persons, "alive," playing on musical instruments, also a "church with windows and glass, provided with four choristers and a ringing bell." Besides these there were twenty more,—a great castle, its fosses filled with orange-water, and on a tower the fairy Melusina; a windmill with archers and cross-bowmen firing at mark; a cask in a vineyard with two fluids, one bitter and the other sweet; a vast desert with a lion and serpent contending; a savage on a camel; a clown prancing on a bear amidst rocks and glaciers; a lake surrounded by cities and castles; a carrack at anchor, bearing rigging, masts and seamen; a beautiful fountain of earth and lead, with small trees of glass in leaf and blooming, and a St. Andrew with his cross; a fountain of rose-water, representing a naked infant in the attitude of the "Mannekenpiss"

of Brussels. You would imagine yourself in a variety store at New Year time. This pêle-mêle of motionless decoration did not suffice; over and above this an active parade was necessary; we see defiling in turn a dozen of interludes, and in the intervals the church and the pie keep busy the ears at the same time as the eyes of the guests; the bell rings with all its might; a shepherd plays on a bag-pipe; little children sing a song; organs, German cornets, trumpets, glees, flutes, a lute with voices, drums, hunting horns and the yelping of hounds succeed each other. Meanwhile a rearing horse appears, richly covered with vermilion silk, mounted by two trumpeters "seated backward and without saddle," led by sixteen knights in long robes; then a hobgoblin, half man, half griffon, who, mounted on a boar and carrying a man, advances with a target and two darts; then a large white mechanical stag, harnessed in silk, with golden horns, and bearing on his back a child in a short dress of crimson velvet, who sings while the stag performs the bass. All these figures make the circuit of the table, while the last invention especially delights the company. A flying dragon

passes through the air, his fiery scales lighting up the recesses of the gothic ceiling. A heron and two falcons are loosed, and the vanquished bird is presented to the Duke. Trumpets sound a blast behind a curtain, which curtain being withdrawn discloses Jason reading a letter from Medea, then combating the bulls, then killing the serpent, then ploughing the ground and sowing the monster's teeth from which arises a crop of armed men. At this point the interest of the fête deepens. It becomes a romance of chivalry, a scene from Amadis, or one of Don Quixote's dreams in action. A giant arrives bearing a pike and turban and leading an elephant caparisoned in silk with a castle on his back, and in this castle a lady attired as a nun and representing the Holy Church; she orders a halt, proclaims her name, and summons the company to the crusade. Thereupon Toison d'Or, with his officers of arms, fetches a live pheasant wearing a golden collar decked with precious stones; the Duke swears upon the pheasant to succor Christendom against the Turk, and all the knights do likewise, each in a document of the style of Galaor, and this is the

pheasant's vow. The fête terminates with a mystic and moral ball. At the sound of instruments and by the light of torches a lady in white, bearing the name of the "Grace of God" on her shoulder, approaches the Duke, recites a stanza and, on retiring, leaves with him the twelve virtues—Faith, Charity, Justice, Reason, Temperance, Strength, Truth, Liberality, Diligence, Hope and Valor—each led by a knight in a crimson pourpoint, the sleeves of which are of satin embroidered with foliage and jewelry. They betake themselves to dancing with their knights, crowning the Count of Charolais the victor in the lists, and, upon the announcement of a new tourney, the ball ends at three o'clock in the morning. Really there is too much of it; the mind and the senses both flag; these people in the way of diversions are gluttons and not epicureans. This uproar and this profusion of quaint conceits shows us a rude society, a race of the North, an incipient civilization still infantile and barbarous; the grandeur and simplicity of Italian taste is wanting in these contemporaries of the Medicis. And yet the groundwork of their habits and imag

mation is the same; here, as with the chariots and pomp of the Florentine carnival, the legends, history and philosophy of the middle ages take shape moral abstractions assume visible form; the virtues become actual women; they are accordingly tempted to paint and sculpture them; all decoration, in effect, consists of reliefs and paintings. The symbolic age gives way to the picturesque age; the intellect is no longer content with a scholastic entity; it seeks to contemplate a living form, the human mind finding it necessary for its completeness to be translated to the eye by a work of art.

But this work of art bears no resemblance to that of Italy for the reason that the culture and direction of the intellect are different; this is evident in reading the simple and dull verses recited by the "Holy Church" and the "Virtues," an empty, senile poetry, the worn-out babble of the trouvères, a rattle of rhymed phrases in which the rythm is as flimsy as the idea. The Netherlands never had a Dante, a Petrarch, a Boccaccio, a Villani. The mind, less precocious and further removed from Latin traditions, remained a longer time subject to mediæval

discipline and inertia. There were no sceptical Averrhöeists and physicians like those described by Petrarch; there were no humanist restorers of ancient literature, almost pagans, like those who surrounded Lorenzo de Medici. Christian faith and sentiment are much more active and tenacious here than in Venice or in Florence. They continue to subsist under the sensual pomp of the Burgundian court. If there are epicureans in social matters there are none in theory; the most gallant serve religion, as the ladies, through a principle of honor. In 1396 seven hundred seigniors of Burgundy and France enlist in the crusade; all, save twenty-seven die at Nicopolis, and Boucicaut calls them "blessed and happy martyrs." You have just witnessed the buffoonery of Lille which ended in a solemn vow to war with the infidels. Here and there scattered traits show the persistency of the primitive devotion. In 1477, in the neighboring town of Nuremburg, Martin Kœtzel, a pilgrim in Palestine, counts the steps between Golgotha and the house of Pilate, that he may, on his return, build seven stations and a calvary between his own house and the cemetery of his

native town; losing his measure he repeats the journey, and this time has the work executed by the sculptor, Adam Kraft. In the Low Countries, as in Germany, the middle class, a sedate and somewhat dull people, restricted to their own narrow circle and attached to ancient usages, preserve much better than court-seigniors the faith and the fervor of the middle ages. Their literature bears witness to this. The moment it takes an original turn, that is to say from the end of the thirteenth century, it furnishes ample testimony to the practical, civic and bourgeois spirit, with abundant evidences of pious fervor; on the one hand appear moral maxims, pictures of domestic life, and historic and political poems relating to recent and true occurences; on the other, lyric laudation of the Virgin, and mystic and tender poetic effusions.* In fine, the national genius, which is Germanic, inclines much more to faith than to incredulity. Through the Lollards and the mystics of the middle ages, also through the iconoclasts and the innumerable martyrs of the sixteenth century, it turns in the direction of Protestant ideas. Left to

* Horæ Belgicæ.

itself it would have developed not, as in Italy, into a pagan renaissance, but, as in Germany, into a recrudescence of Christianity. The art, moreover, which, of all the others, best reveals the cravings of the popular imagination, architecture, remains gothic and Christian up to the end of the sixteenth century; Italian and classic importations do not affect it; the style gets to be complicated and effeminate, but the art does not change. It prevails not only in the churches but in laic edifices; the town-halls of Bruges, Louvain, Brussels, Liege and Audenarde show to what extent it was cherished not only by the priesthood but by the nation; the people remained faithful to it to the end: the town-hall of Audenarde was begun seven years after the death of Raphael. In 1536, in the hands of a Flemish woman, Margaret of Austria, the church of Brou, the latest and prettiest flower of gothic art, bloomed out in its perfection. Sum up all these indications and consider, in the protraiture of the day, the personages themselves,* the donors, abbés,

* See in the Musées of Antwerp, Brussels and Bruges, the triptychs whose doors present entire families of the period.

burgomasters, townspeople and matrons, so grave and so simple in their Sunday clothes and spotless linen, with their rigid air and their expression of deep and settled faith, and you will recognize that here the sixteenth century renaissance took place within religious limits, that man in making the present life more attractive never lost sight of that to come, and that his picturesque invention is the manifestation of a vivacious Christianity instead of expressing, as in Italy, a restored paganism.

A Flemish renaissance underneath Christian ideas, such, in effect, is the two-fold nature of art under Hubert and John Van Eyck, Roger Van der Weyde, Hemling and Quintin Matsys; and from these two characteristics proceed all the others. On the one hand, artists take interest in actual life; their figures are no longer symbols like the illuminations of ancient missals, nor purified spirits like the Madonnas of the school of Cologne, but living beings and bodies. They attend to anatomy, the perspective is exact, the minutest details are rendered of stuffs, of architecture, of accessories and of landscape; the relief is strong, and the entire scene stamps itself on

the eye and on the mind with extraordinary force and sense of stability; the greatest masters of coming times are not to surpass them in all this, nor even go so far. Nature evidently is now discovered by them. The scales fall from their eyes; they have just mastered, almost in a flash, the proportions, the structure and the coloring of visible realities; and moreover, they delight in them. Consider the superb copes wrought in gold and decked with diamonds, the embroidered silks, the flowered and dazzling diadems with which they ornament their saints and divine personages,* all of which represents the pomp of the Burgundian court. Look at the calm and transparent water, the bright meadows, the red and white flowers, the blooming trees, the sunny distances of their admirable landscapes.† Observe their coloring—the strongest and richest ever seen, the pure and full tones side by side as in a Persian carpet, and united solely through their harmony, the

* "God the Father, and the Virgin," by Hubert van Eyck. "The Virgin, St. Barbara and St. Catherine," by Memling, and "The Entombment," by Quintin Matsys.

† "St. Christopher," "The Baptism of Jesus," by Memling and his school. "The Adoration of the Lamb," by the Van Eycks.

superb breaks in the folds of purple mantles, the azure recesses of long falling robes, the green draperies like a summer field permeated with sunshine, the display of gold skirts trimmed with black, the strong light which warms and enlivens the whole scene; you have a concert in which each instrument sounds its proper note, and the more true because the more sonorous. They see the world on the bright side and make a holiday of it, a genuine fête, similar to those of this day, glowing under a more bounteous sunlight and not a heavenly Jerusalem suffused with supernatural radiance such as Fra Angelico painted. They are Flemings, and they stick to the earth. They copy the real with scrupulous accuracy, and all that is real—the ornaments of armor, the polished glass of a window, the scrolls of a carpet, the hairs of fur,* the undraped body of an Adam and an Eve, a canon's massive, wrinkled and obese features, a burgomaster's or soldier's broad shoulders, projecting chin and prominent nose, the

* See "The Madonna and St. George," by Jan Van Eyck, the Antwerp triptych of Quintin Matsys, etc. The "Adam and Eve," of Huber Van Eyck at Brussels, and "The Adoration of the Lamb."

spindling shanks of a hangman, the over large head and diminutive limbs of a child, the costumes and furniture of the age; their entire work being a glorification of this present life. But, on the other hand, it is a glorification of Christian belief. Not only are their subjects almost all of a religious order, but again they are imbued with a religious sentiment which, in the following age, is not to be found in the same scenes. Their best pictures represent no actual event in sacred history but a verity of faith, a summary of doctrine. Hubert Van Eyck regards painting in the same light as Simone Memmi, or Taddeo Gaddi, that is to say, as an exposition of higher theology; his figures and his accessories may be realistic, but they are likewise symbolic. The cathedral in which Roger Van der Weyde portrays the seven sacraments is at once a material church and a spiritual church; Christ appears bleeding on his cross, while at the same time the priest is performing mass at the altar. The chamber or portico in which John Van Eyck and Memling place their kneeling saints is an illusion in its detail and finish, but the Virgin on her throne and the angels who crown her show

the believer that he is in a superior realm. A hierarchical symmetry groups personages and stiffens attitudes. With Hubert Van Eyck the eye is fixed and the face impassible; it is the eternal immobility of divine life; in heaven all is fulfilled and time is no more. In other instances, as with Memling, there is the quietude of absolute faith, the peace of mind preserved in the cloister as in a sleeping forest, the immaculate purity, mournful sweetness, the infinite trust of the truly pious nun absorbed with her own reveries, and whose large open eyes look out upon vacancy. These paintings, in turn, are subjects for the altar or private chapel; they do not appeal like those of later ages to grand seigniors whose church-going consists of mere routine, and who crave, even in religious history, pagan pomp and the torsos of wrestlers; they appeal to the faithful, in order to suggest to them the form of the supernatural world or the emotions of fervid piety, to show them the immutable serenity of beatified saints and the tender humility of the elect; Ruysbroeck, Eckart, Tauler and Henry de Suzo, the theological mystics of Germany antecedent to Luther, might here resort. It is

a strange sight, and one which does not seem to accord with the sensuous parade of the court and the sumptuous entries of the cities. We find a similar contrast between the profound religious sentiment of the Madonnas of Albert Dürer and the worldly splendor of his "House of Maximilian." The reason is, we are in a Germanic country; the renaissance of general prosperity and the emancipation of the intellect which results from it here revive Christianity instead of destroying it as in a Latin country.

II.

When a great change is effected in human affairs it brings on by degrees a corresponding change in human conceptions. After the discovery of the Indies and of America, after the invention of printing and the multiplication of books, after the restoration of classic antiquity and the Reformation of Luther, any conception of the world then formed could no longer remain monastic and mystic. The tender and melancholy aspiration of a soul sighing for the celestial kingdom and humbly subjecting its conduct to the authority of an undisputed Church gave way to free inquiry nourished on so many fresh conceptions, and disappeared at the admirable spectacle of this real world which man now began to comprehend and to conquer. The rhetorical academies which, at first, were composed of a clerical body passed into the hands of the laity; they had preached the payment of tithes and submission to the Church; they now ridiculed the clergy and combated ecclesiastical abuses

In 1533 nine citizens of Amsterdam were condemned to a pilgrimage to Rome for having represented one of these satirical pieces. In 1539, at Ghent, the question having been proposed of: Who are the greatest fools in the world? eleven out of nineteen academies reply: The monks. "A few poor monks and nuns," says a contemporary, "always appear in the comedies; it seems as if people could not enjoy themselves without making sport of God and the Church." Philip II. had decreed the punishment of death against authors and actors whose pieces were not authorized or were impious. But they were performed, nevertheless, even in the villages. "The word of God," says the same author, "first found its way into these countries through plays, and for this reason they are forbidden much more rigidly than the writings of Martin Luther."* It is evident that the mind had become emancipated from ancient tutelage, and that people and burghers, artizans and

* In 1539 Louvain proposes this question: "What is the greatest consolation to a dying man?" The responses all have a Lutheran cast. The Academy of St. Wynockberge, bearing off the second prize, answers, according to the doctrine of pure grace: "The faith that Christ and his Spirit have been given to us."

merchants began to think for themselves on matters of salvation and morality.

The extraordinary wealth and prosperity of the country lead to picturesque and sensuous customs; here, as in England at the same epoch, a renaissance pomp overlays a silent Protestant fermentation. When Charles V., in 1520, made his entry into the city of Antwerp, Albert Dürer saw four hundred triumphal arches, two stories high and forty feet long, decorated with paintings on which allegorical representations were given. The performers consisted of young girls belonging to the best bourgeois class, clothed simply in thin gauze, "almost naked," says the honest German artist,—"I have rarely seen more beautiful. I gazed at them very attentively, and even passionately, inasmuch as I am a painter." The festivals of the belle-lettre academies become magnificent; cities and communities rival each other in luxurious allegorical creations. At the invitation of the violinists of Antwerp fourteen academies, in 1562, send their "triumphs," and the academy called the *Guirlande de Marie*, at Brussels, obtains the prize. "For," says Van Meteren, "there

were full three hundred and forty men on horseback, all dressed in velvet and in dark purple silk, with long Polish cassocks embroidered with silver lace, and wearing red hats fashioned like antique helmets; their pourpoints, plumes and bootees were white. They wore belts of silver tocque, very ingeniously woven with yellow, red, blue and white. They had seven chariots made after the antique pattern, with divers personages borne thereon. They had, beside, seventy-eight ordinary chariots with torches; the said chariots were covered with red cloth bordered with white. The charioteers all wore red mantles, and on these chariots were divers personages representing a number of beautiful antique figures, all of which goes to show how people will assemble in friendship to share in amity." *La Pione de Malines* provides a parade almost equal to this consisting of three hundred and twenty men on horseback, attired in a flesh-colored material embroidered with gold, seven antique chariots emblazoned and flaming with all sorts of lights. Add to this the entry of twelve other processions, and then enumerate the plays, pantomines, fireworks and ban-

quets which follow after. "There were several similar games given during the peace in other cities..... I have deemed it proper to narrate all this," says Van Meteren, "for the purpose of showing the happy union and prosperity of those countries in those days." After the departure of Philip II., "instead of one court there seemed to be a hundred and fifty." The nobles vied with each other in magnificence, maintaining free tables and spending without stint. On one occasion the Prince of Orange, wishing to diminish his train, discharged in a body twenty-eight head cooks. Lordly mansions swarmed with pages and gentlemen and superb liveries; the full tide of the renaissance overflowed in folly and extravagance, as under Elizabeth in England, in pompous array, cavalcades, games and good cheer. The Count of Brederode drank so much at one of St. Martin's feasts that he came near dying; the rhinegrave's brother did actually die at the table through too great fondness of Malvoisie wine. Never did life seem more bright or beautiful. Like Florence under the Medicis in the preceding century, it ceased to be tragic; man had expanded; murderous

revolts and sanguinary wars between city and city and corporation and corporation quietly subsided; only one sedition takes place in Ghent in 1536 which is easily quelled without much bloodshed, the last and a feeble convulsion, not to be compared with the formidable insurrections of the fifteenth century. Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary, and Margaret of Parma, the three rulers, are popular; Charles V. is a national prince, speaking Flemish, boasting of his nativity in Ghent, and protecting, by treaties, the manufactures and trade of the country. He fosters and nourishes it; Flanders, in return, supplies him with the half of his entire revenue;* in his herd of states she is the fat milch cow which is milked constantly without being dried up. Thus, while the mind is expanding, the temperature around it becomes modified and establishes the conditions of a new growth; we see the dawn of it in the festivals of the belle-lettre academies, which are classic representations precisely like those of the Florence carnival and quite different from the quaint conceits accumulated at the banquets of the Dukes of Bur-

* Two million of crowns of gold out of five million.

gundy. "The 'Violet,' 'Olive' and 'Thought' academies of Antwerp," says Guiccardini, "give public performances of comedies, tragedies and other histories in imitation of the Greeks and Romans.' Society, ideas and tastes have undergone a transformation, and there is room for a new art.

Already in the preceding epoch we see premonitory symptoms of the coming change. From Hubert Van Eyck to Quintin Matsys the grandeur and gravity of religious conceptions have diminished. Nobody now dreams of portraying the whole of Christian faith and doctrine in a single picture; scenes are selected from the Gospel and from history—annunciations, shepherd adorations, last judgments, martyrdoms and moral legends. Painting, which is epic in the hands of Hubert Van Eyck, becomes idyllic in those of Hemling and almost worldly in those of Quintin Matsys. It gets to be pathetic, interesting and pleasing. The charming saints, the beautiful Herodias and the lithe Salome of Quintin Matsys are richly attired noble dames and already laic; the artist loves the world as it is and for itself, and does not subordinate

it to the representation of the supernatural world he does not employ it as a means but as an end. Scenes of profane life multiply; he paints townspeople in their shops; money-changers, amorous couples, and the attenuated features and stealthy smiles of a miser. Lucas of Leyden, his contemporary, is an ancestor of the painters whom we call the lesser Flemings; his "Presentation of Christ" and "The Magdalen's Dance" have nothing religious about them but their titles; the evangelical subject is lost in the accessories; that which the picture truly presents is a rural Flemish festival, or a gathering of Flemings on an open field. Jerome Bosch, of the same period, paints grotesque, infernal scenes. Art, it is clear, falls from heaven to earth, and is no longer to treat divine but human incidents. Artists, in other respects, lack no process and no preparation; they understand perspective, they know the use of oil, and are masters of modelling and relief; they have studied actual types; they know how to paint dresses, accessories, architecture and landscape with wonderful accuracy and finish; their manipulative skill is admirable. One defect

only still chains them to hieratic art, which is the immobility of their faces and the rigid folds of their stuffs. They have but to observe the rapid play of physiognomies and the easy movement of loose drapery, and the renaissance is complete; the breeze of the age is behind them and already fills their sails. On looking at their portraits, their interiors, and even their sacred personages, as in the "Entombment" of Quintin Matsys, one is tempted to address them thus: "You are alive—one effort more! Come, bestir yourselves! Shake off the middle age entirely! Depict the modern man for us as you find him within you and outside of you. Paint him vigorous, healthy and content with existence. Forget the meagre, ascetic and pensive spirit, dreaming in the chapels of Hemling. If you choose a religious scene for the motive of your picture, compose it, like the Italians, of active and healthy figures, only let these figures proceed from your national and personal taste. You have a soul of your own, which is Flemish and not Italian; let the flower bloom; judging by the bud it will be a beautiful one." And, indeed, when we regard the

sculptures of the time, such as the chimney of the Palais de Justice and the tomb of Charles the Bold at Bruges, the church and monuments of Brou, we see the promise of an original and complete art, less sculptural and less refined than the Italian, but more varied, more expressive and closer to nature, less subject to rule but nearer to the real, more capable of manifesting spirit and personality, the impulses, the unpremeditated, the diversities, the lights and darks of education, temperament and age of the individual; in short, a Germanic art which indicates remote successors to the Van Eycks and remote predecessors of Rubens.

They never appeared, or at all events, they imperfectly fulfilled their task. No nation, it must be noted, lives alone in the world; alongside of the Flemish renaissance there existed the Italian renaissance, and the large tree stifled the small plant. It flourished and grew for a century; the literature, the ideas and the masterpieces of precocious Italy imposed themselves on sluggish Europe, and the Flemish cities, through their commerce, and the Austrian dynasty, through its possessions and its Italian

affairs, introduced into the North the tastes and models of the new civilization. Towards 1520 the Flemish painters began to borrow from the artists of Florence and Rome. John of Mabuse is the first one who, in 1513, on returning from Italy, introduced the Italian into the old style, and the rest followed. It is so natural in advancing into an unexplored country to take the path already marked out! This path, however, is not made for those who follow it; the long line of Flemish carts is to be delayed and stuck fast in the disproportionate ruts which another set of wheels have worn. There are two traits characteristic of Italian art, both of which run counter to the Flemish imagination. On the one hand Italian art centres on the natural body, healthy, active and vigorous, endowed with every athletic aptitude, that is to say, naked or semi-draped, frankly pagan, enjoying freely and nobly in full sunshine every limb, instinct and animal faculty, the same as an ancient Greek in his city or palestrum, or, as at this very epoch, a Cellini on the Italian streets and highways. Now a Fleming does not easily enter into this conception. He belongs to a cold and humid climate; a

man there in a state of nudity shivers. The human form here does not display the fine proportions nor the easy attitudes required by classic art; it is often dumpy or too gross; the white, soft, yielding flesh, easily flushed, requires to be clothed. When the painter returns from Rome and strives to pursue Italian art, his surroundings oppose his education; his sentiment being no longer renewed through his contact with living nature, he is reduced to his souvenirs. Moreover, he is of Germanic race; in other terms he is organically a morally good-natured man, and even modest; he has difficulty in appreciating the pagan idea of nudity, and still greater difficulty in comprehending the fatal and magnificent idea* which governs civilization and stimulates the arts beyond the Alps, namely, that of the complete and sovereign individual, emancipated from every law, subordinating the rest, men and things, to the development of his own nature and the growth of his own faculties. Our painter is related, although distantly, to Martin

* Burckhardt's "Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien," an admirable work, the most complete and most philosophic yet written on the Italian Renaissance.

Schœn and Albert Dürer; he is a bourgeois, almost docile and staid, a lover of the comfortable and the decent, and adapted to family and domestic life. His biographer, Karl Van Mander, at the beginning of his book, furnishes him with moral precepts. Read this patriarchal treatise, and imagine the distance between a Rosso, a Giulio Romano, a Titian and a Giorgione, and their pupils of Leyden or Antwerp. "All vices," says the good Fleming, "bring their own punishment. Distrust the maxim that the best painter is he who is the most dissipated. Unworthy of the name of artist is he who leads an evil life. Painters should never dispute or enter into strife with each other. To squander one's property is not a meritorious art. Avoid paying court to women in your youthful days. Shun the society of frivolous women, who corrupt so many painters. Reflect before you depart for Rome, for the opportunities to spend money there are great, and none are there for earning it. Ever be thankful to God for His bounties." Special recommendations follow concerning Italian inns, bed linen and fleas. It is evident that pupils of this class, even with great labor, will produce but

little more than academic figures; man, according to their conceptions, is a draped body; when, following the example of the Italian masters, they attempt the nude, they render it without freedom, without spirit, without vivacity of invention; their pictures, in fact, are simply cold and meagre imitation; their motive is pedantic; they execute servilely and badly that which, in Italy, is done naturally and well. On the other hand, Italian art, like Greek art, and, in general, all classic art, simplifies in order to embellish; it eliminates, effaces, and reduces detail; by this means it gives greater value to grander features. Michael Angelo and the admirable Florentine school subordinate or suppress accessories, landscape, fabrics and costume; with them the essential consists of the noble and the grandiose type, the anatomical and muscular structure, the nude or lightly draped form taken by itself, abstractly, through the retrenchment of particulars constituting the individual and denoting his profession, education and condition; you have man in general represented, and not a special man. Their personages are in a superior world, because they are of a

world which is not; the peculiar feature of the scene they depict is the nullity of time and space. Nothing is more opposed to Germanic and Flemish genius, which sees things as they are in their entirety and complexity; which, in man, takes in, besides man in general, the contemporary, the citizen, the peasant, the laborer, this citizen, that laborer, that peasant; which attaches as much importance to the accessories of a man as to the man himself; which loves not merely human nature but all nature, animate and inanimate—cattle, horses, plants, landscape, sky, and even the atmosphere—its broader sympathies forestalling any neglect of objects, and its more minute observation requiring the fullest expression. You can comprehend how, in subjecting itself to a discipline so contrary, it loses the qualities it had without acquiring those it had not; how, in order that it may arrogate the ideal, it reduces color, loses the sentiment of light and atmosphere, obliterates the true details of costume and of interiors, deprives figures of original diversities peculiar to portrait and person, and is led to moderate the suddenness of motion constituting the impulsiveness of nature's activity,

and thereby impairing ideal symmetry. It finds difficulty, however, in making all these sacrifices; its instinct only partially yields to its education. Flemish reminiscences may be traced underneath Italian velleity; both in turn predominate in the same picture; each prevents the other from having their full effect; their painting, consequently, uncertain, imperfect and diverted by two tendencies, furnishing us with historical documents and not beautiful works of art.

Such is the spectacle presented in Flanders during the last three quarters of the sixteenth century. Like a small river receiving a large stream, the mingled waters of which are disturbed until the foreign affluent imposes its more powerful tint on the entire current, so do we find the national style, invaded by the Italian, dappled irregularly and in places, gradually disappearing, only rarely rising to the surface, and at last sinking into obscure depths, whilst the other displays itself in the light and attracts universal attention. It is interesting to trace in the public galleries this conflict of the two currents and the peculiar effects of their commingling. The first Ital-

ian influx takes place with John de Mabuse, Bernard Van Orley, Lambert Lombard, John Mostaert, John Schorel, and Launcelot Blondel. They import in their pictures classic architecture, veined marble pilasters, medallions, shell niches, sometimes triumphal arches and cariatides, sometimes also noble and vigorous female figures in antique drapery, a sound nude form, well proportioned and vitalized, of the fine pagan stock, and healthy; their imitation reduces itself to this, while in other respects they follow national traditions. They still paint small pictures, suitable for genre subjects; they almost always preserve the strong and rich coloring of the preceding age, the mountains and blue distances of John Van Eyck, the clear skies vaguely tinged with emerald on the horizon, the magnificent stuffs covered with gold and jewels, the powerful relief, the minute precision of detail, and the solid honest heads of the bourgeoisie. But as they are no longer restrained by hieratic gravity they fall, in attempting to emancipate themselves, into simple awkwardness and ridiculous inconsistencies. The children of Job, crushed by their falling palace, sprawl about grimacing and

writhing as if possessed; on the other panel of the triptych is the devil in the air mounting upward like a bat towards the petty Christ of a missal. Long feet and lean ascetic hands form the odd appurtenances of a shapely body. A "Last Supper" by Lambert Lombard mingles together Flemish clumsiness and vulgarity with the composition of Da Vinci. A "Last Judgment" by Bernard Van Orley introduces demons by Martin Schœn amidst the academic figures of Raphael. In the next generation the rising flood begins to engulph all; Michael Van Coxcyen, Heemskerk, Franz Floris, Martin de Vos, the Franckens, Van Mander, Spranger, Pourbus the elder, and later, Goltzius, besides many others, resemble people ambitious of speaking Italian but who do so laboriously, with an accent and some barbarisms. The canvas is enlarged and approaches the usual dimensions of an historical subject; the manner of painting is less simple; Karl Van Mander reproaches his contemporaries with "overloading their brushes," which was not formerly done, and with carrying *impasto* to excess. Coloring dies out; it becomes more and more white, chalky and pallid. Painters enter

passionately into the study of anatomy, foreshortenings and muscular development; their drawing becomes dry and hard, reminding one at once of the goldsmiths contemporary with Pollaiolo and the exaggerating disciples of Michael Angelo; they lay great or violent stress on their science, they insist on proving their ability to manipulate the skeleton and produce action; you will find Adams and Eves, Saint Sebastians, Massacres of the Innocents, and Horatii resembling grotesque forms of living and bare muscles; their personages look as if casting their skins. When they show more moderation, and the painter, like Franz Floris in his "Fall of the Angels," discreetly copies good classic models, his nudities are scarcely any better; realistic sentiment and the quaint Germanic imagination peer out among ideal forms; demons with the heads of cats, fishes and swine, and with horns, claws and humps, and blowing fire from their jaws, introduce bestial comedy and a fantastic sabbat into the midst of the noble Olympus; we have one of Teniers' buffooneries inserted in a poem by Raphael. Others, like Martin Vos, strain themselves to produce the great sacred

picture, figures imitated from the antique, cuirasses, draperies and tunics, studied correctness in composition, gestures indicative of noble action and stage heads and head gear, while they are substantially genre painters and lovers of reality and accessories. They constantly fall back to their Flemish types and their domestic details; their pictures seem to be enlarged colored engravings; they would be much better were they of small size. We feel in the artist a perverted talent, a natural disposition thwarted, an instinct working against the grain, a prose-writer born for narrating social incidents of whom the public commands epics in sounding Alexandrines.* Still another wave, and the remains of national genius seem wholly submerged. A painter of noble family, well brought up, instructed by an erudite, a man of the world and a courtier, a favorite of the great Italian and Spanish leaders who manage matters in the Netherlands, Otto Venius, after passing seven years in Italy, brings from that country noble and pure

* This period of Flemish art is analogous to that of English literature after the Restoration. In both cases a Germanic art attempts to be classic; in both cases the contrast between education and nature produces hybrid works and multiplied failures.

antique types, beautiful Venetian color, melting and subtly graduated tones, shadows permeated with light, and the vague purples of flesh and of ruddy foliage. Excepting his native stimulus he is Italian, and no longer belongs to his race; scarcely more than a fragment of costume or the simple attitude of a stooping old man connects him with his country. Nothing remains to the painter but to abandon it entirely. Denis Calvaert establishes himself at Bologna, enters into competition with the Caraccis, and is the master of Guido. Flemish art accordingly seems, through its own course, to suppress itself for the advantage of another.

And yet it still subsists underneath the other. In vain does the genius of a people yield to foreign influences. It always recovers. These are temporary, while that is eternal; it belongs to the flesh and the blood, the atmosphere and the soil, the structure and degree of activity of brain and senses; all are animating forces incessantly renewed and everywhere present, and which the transient applause of a superior civilization neither undermines nor destroys. This is apparent in the preservation of two styles

which continue pure amidst the growing transforma tion of the others. Mabuse, Morstaert, Van Orley, the two Pourbus, John Van Cleve, Antonis Moor, the two Mierevelts and Paul Moreelze produce excellent portraits; often, in the triptychs, the faces of the donataires, arranged in rows on the shutters, form a contrast in their homely sincerity, calm gravity and profound simplicity of expression with the frigidity and artificial composition of the principal subject; the spectator feels himself quite re-animated; instead of manikins he finds men. On the other hand there arises the painting of genre subjects, landscapes and interiors. After Quintin Matsys, and Lucas of Leyden, we see it developing with John Matsys, Van Hemessen, the Breughels, Vinckenbooms, the three Valkenburgs, Peter Neefs and Paul Bril, and especially in the multitude of engravers and illustrators who reproduce, on scattered sheets or in books, the moralities, social incidents, professions, conditions and events of the day. They are, undoubtedly, to remain for a long time fantastic and humorous. This art mixes up nature promiscuously, according to its own disordered fancies; it is unconscious of the

true forms and the true tint of trees and mountains; it makes its figures howling, and introduces amidst the costumes of the period grotesque monsters similar to those promenading through the *kermesses.* But all these intermediary objects are natural, and insensibly lead on to its final state, which is the knowledge and love of actual life, as the eye contemplates it. Here, as in the painting of portraits, the chain is complete; the metal of all its links is national; through Breughel, Paul Bril and Peter Neefs, through Antonis Moor, the Pourbus and the Mierevelts, it joins on to the Flemish and Dutch masters of the seventeenth century. The rigidity of ancient figures is relaxed; a mystic landscape becomes real; the transition from the divine to the human age is accomplished. This spontaneous and regular development shows that national instincts are maintained under the empire of foreign fashions; let a crisis intervene to arouse them, and they recover their ascendancy, while art is transformed according to the public taste. This crisis is the great revolution commencing in 1572, the long and terrible War of Independence, as grand in its events and as

fecund of results as our French Revolution. Here, as with us, the renewal of the moral world is the renewal of the ideal world; the Flemish and Dutch art of the seventeenth century, like the French art and literature of the nineteenth century, is the reaction of a vast tragedy performed for thirty years at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives. Here, however, the scaffolds and battles, having divided the nation, form two peoples; one Catholic and legitimist in Belgium, and the other Protestant and republican in Holland. While both were combined there was but one spirit; divided and opposed there were two. Antwerp and Amsterdam held different conceptions of life, and, accordingly, display different schools of painting; the same political crisis which divided their country divided their art.

III.

We must look closely into the formation of Belgium* in order to comprehend the rise of the school which bears the name of Rubens. Previous to the War of Independence the Southern provinces seemed to tend to the Reformation as well as the provinces of the North. In 1566 bands of iconoclasts had devastated the cathedrals of Antwerp, Ghent and Tournay, and broken everywhere, in the churches and the abbeys, all images and ornaments deemed idolatrous. In the environs of Ghent thousands of armed Calvinists flocked to the preachings of Hermann Stricker. Crowds gathered around the stake, sang psalms, sometimes stoned the executioners and set the condemned free. Death penalties had to be enacted in order to suppress the satires of the belle-lettre academies, and when the Duke of Alba began

* All are aware that this name dates from the French Revolution. I employ it here as the most convenient term. The historic designation of Belgium is "The Spanish Low Countries," and of Holland "The United Provinces."

his massacres the whole country rushed to arms. The resistance, however, was not the same in the South as in the North; in the South the Germanic race, the independent and Protestant race, was not pure; the Walloons, a mixed population speaking French, constituted one half of the inhabitants. The soil, moreover, being richer, and living easier, there was less energy and greater sensuality; man was less resolved to suffer and more inclined to enjoy. Finally, almost all the Walloons, besides the families of the great, being attached to court sentiment through a court life, were Catholic. Hence it is that the Southern provinces did not contend with the indomitable stubbornness of the Northern provinces. There is nothing in them like the sieges of Maestricht, Harlem, Alkmaar and Leyden, where women enlisted, fought, and were slaughtered in the breach. After the taking of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma the ten provinces returned to their allegiance, and began apart a new existence. The most spirited citizens and the most fervent Calvinists had perished in battle and on the scaffold, or had fled to the North in the seven free provinces. The

belle-lettre academies exiled themselves there in a body. On the termination of the Duke of Alva's administration it was estimated that sixty thousand families had emigrated; after the capture of Ghent eleven thousand more departed, and after the capitulation of Antwerp four thousand weavers betook themselves to London. Antwerp lost the half of its inhabitants, and Ghent and Bruges two-thirds; whole streets were empty; in the principal street of Ghent a couple of horses cropped the grass. A mighty surgical operation had relieved the nation of what the Spaniards called its bad blood; at all events that which remained was the most quiescent. There is a great substratum of docility in the Germanic races; think of the German regiments exported to America and sold there to die by their petty absolute princes: the sovereign once accepted, they are faithful to him; with guaranteed rights he seems legitimate; they are inclined to respect the established order of things. The continued constraint, moreover, of irremediable necessity produces its effect; man accommodates himself to things when he is satisfied that he cannot change them

certain portions of his character which cannot be developed languish, and others expand the more. There are moments in the history of a nation when it bears some resemblance to Christ taken to the top of a high mountain by Satan, and there bid to choose between a heroic and a common life; here the tempter is Philip II., with his armies and executioners; the people of the North and the South, both subject to the same trial, decide differently according to the petty diversities of their composition and character. The choice made these diversities grow, and are exaggerated by the effects of the situation they themselves have produced. Both people being two almost indeterminate varieties of one species become two distinct species. It is with moral types as with organic types; they issue at the beginning from a common origin, but as they complete their development they grow wider apart and are thus formed through their divergencies. The Southern provinces henceforth become Belgium. The dominant trait is the craving for peace and comfort, the disposition to take life on the jovial and pleasant side, in brief, the sentiment of

Teniers. In fact, even in a dilapidated cabin or in a bare tavern on a wooden bench a man may laugh, sing, smoke a good pipe and swallow deep draughts of beer; it is not disagreeable to attend mass as a fine ceremony, nor to recount one's sins to an accommodating Jesuit. After the capture of Antwerp, Philip II. is delighted to hear that communions have become more and more frequent. Convents are founded twenty at a time. "It is a matter worthy of remark," says a contemporary, "that since the happy advent of the archdukes more new establishments have arisen than in two hundred years and before that"—Franciscans, reformed Carmelites, friars of St. Francis de Paule, Carmelites, annunciada, and especially the Jesuits; the latter in fact bring with them a new Christianity, the most appropriate to the state of the country, and which seems manufactured purposely to contrast with that of the Protestants. Be docile in mind and in heart, and all the rest is tolerance and indulgence; in this connection see the portraits of the day, and among others, the gay fellow who was confessor to Rubens. Casuistry is shaped to and serves for difficult cases;

under its empire there is scope enough for all current peccadilloes. Worship, moreover, is exempt from prudery, and winds up by being amusing. To this epoch belongs the worldly and sensualistic internal decoration of the grave and venerable cathedral, the multiplied and contorted ornaments—flames, lyres, trinkets and scrolls, the veneerings of veined marbles, altars resembling theatre façades, and the quaint diverting pulpits overlaid with a menagerie of carved birds and brutes. As respects the new churches, the outside suits the inside. That of the Jesuits, built in Antwerp at the beginning of the seventeenth century, is instructive, it being a saloon filled with *étagères*. Its thirty-six ceilings were executed by Rubens, and it is curious to see here as elsewhere an ascetic and mystic faith accept as edifying subjects the most blooming and the most exposed nudities, buxom Magdalens, plump St. Sebastians and Madonnas whom the negro magi are devouring with all the lust of their eyes, a display of flesh and fabrics unequalled by the Florentine carnival in luxurious temptation and in triumphant sensuality.

Meanwhile the altered political situation contributes to the transformation of the intellectual world. The old despotism becomes relaxed; to the rigors of the Duke of Alva succeeds the liberal policy of the Duke of Parma. After an amputation, a man who has bled profusely must be restored by soothing and strengthening treatment; hence it is that, after the pacification of Ghent, the Spaniards let their terrible edicts against heresy lie dormant. Executions are at an end. The latest martyr is a poor sewing woman, buried alive in 1597. In the following century Jordaens, with his wife and her family, become Protestants without being annoyed, and even without losing any of his commissions. The archdukes permit towns and corporations to govern themselves according to ancient usages, to collect imposts and attend to their own business; when they desire to have Breughel de Velours relieved of military duty or of exactions, they make their appeal to the commune. The government becomes regular, semi-liberal, and almost national; Spanish extortions, razzias, and brutalities disappear. At length, in order to keep possession of the country, Philip II. is com-

pelled to let it remain Flemish, and exist as a separate state. In 1599 he detaches it from Spain, and cedes it in full possession to Albert and Isabella. "The Spaniards never did a better thing," writes the French ambassador; "it would be impossible to keep the country without giving it this new system, as it was ripe for revolution." The States-General meet in 1600, and decide for reforms. We see in Guiccardini, and other travellers, that the old constitution arises almost intact out of the rubbish under which it had been buried by military violence. "At Bruges," M. de Monconys writes in 1653, "each trade has a house in common, where those of the profession meet to transact the business of the community, or for recreation; and all the trades are distributed into four divisions, under the control of four burgomasters, who have charge of the keys of the city, the Governor exercising no jurisdiction or power over any but the military force." The archdukes are wise and solicitous of the public welfare. In 1609 they make peace with Holland; in 1611 their perpetual edict completes the restoration of the country. They either are or render themselves power-

ful; Isabella, with her own hand, strikes down, on the Place de Sablon, the bird which sanctifies the cross-bowman's pledge; Albert attends at Louvain the lectures of Justus Lepsius. They love, cherish, and attach themselves to famous artists—Otto Venius, Rubens, Teniers, and Breughel de Velours. The belle-lettre institutions flourish again, and the universities are favored; in the Catholic world, under the Jesuits and often by their side, is a kind of intellectual renaissance; a number of theologians, controversialists, casuists, erudites, geographers, physicians, and even historians, arise—Mercator, Ortelius, Van Helmont, Jansenius, Lepsius, all of whom are Flemings of this epoch. The "Description of Flanders," by Sander, a vast work completed after so many trials, is a monument of national zeal and patriotic pride. If, in turn, we wish to form an idea of the state of the country, take one of the tranquil and fallen cities to-day like Bruges. Sir Dudley Carleton, passing through Antwerp in 1616, finds it a handsome place, although nearly empty; he may have seen no more than "forty persons in the entire street," not a carriage, not a horseman, not a cus

tomer in the shops; but the houses are well maintained, everything being clean and cared for: the peasant has rebuilt his burnt cabin and is at work in the field; the housewife is attending to her duties; security has returned, and is about to be followed by plenty; there are shooting matches, processions, fairs and magnificent entries of princes; people are getting back to old comforts beyond which they do not aspire; religion is left to the Church, and government to the princes: here, as at Venice, the course of events has brought man down to the quest of enjoyment—the effort to obtain it being the more strenuous in proportion to the strong contrast with their previous misery.

And, in truth, what a contrast! It is necessary to have read the details of the war in order to appreciate it. Fifty thousand martys had perished under Charles V., eighteen thousand persons had been executed by the Duke of Alva, and the revolted country had maintained the war for thirteen years. The Spaniards had reconquered the large cities only by famine after protracted sieges. In the beginning Antwerp was sacked for three days;

seven thousand of her citizens were slain, and five hundred houses were burnt. The soldier lived on the country, and we see him in the engravings of the day plundering and robbing dwellings, torturing the husband, violating the wife, and bearing away chests and furniture in carts. When his pay was withheld too long he took up his quarters in a town, and this led to a republic of brigands; under an *cletto* of their own choice they ravaged the environs at their convenience. Karl Van Mander, the historian of the painters, on returning one day to his village, found his house pillaged along with the rest; the soldiers had even taken the bed and bedclothes of his old sick father. Karl was driven out naked, and they were already fixing a rope to his neck to hang him when he was saved by a cavalier whom he had known in Italy. Another time, as he was on the road with his wife and an infant child, they took his money, baggage and clothes, his wife's and those of the infant; the mother could only secure a small petticoat, the infant a tattered net, and Karl an old worn-out piece of cloth in which he wrapped himself up, and in which guise he

reached Bruges. Under this regime a country ceases to exist; soldiers themselves finally die of starvation; the Duke of Parma writes to Philip II. that if he fails to send relief the army is lost, "for nobody can live without eating." On emerging from such calamities, peace seems a paradise; it is not merely the *good* at which man rejoices, but the *better*, and here the better is stupendous. A man can now sleep in his own bed, store up provisions, enjoy the fruits of his labor, travel about and assemble and converse with his fellows without fear; he has a home, a country and a future. All the ordinary occurrences of life get to be interesting and attractive; he revives, and for the first time seems to live. It is circumstances like these out of which always springs a spontaneous literature and an original art. The great crisis through which the nation has passed serves to remove the monotonous varnish with which tradition and custom have overspread things. We find out what man is; we seize on the fundamental points of his renewed and transformed nature; we see its depth, its secret instincts, the master forces which denote his race and are

about to control his history; half a century later and we see them no more, because during a half century they have been constantly visible. In the meantime, however, the new order of things becomes complete; the mind confronts it like Adam on his first awakening; it is only later that conceptions get to be over-refined and weakened; they are now broad and simple. Man is qualified for this through his birth in a crumbling society and an education in the midst of veritable tragedies; like Victor Hugo and George Sand, the child Rubens, in exile, alongside of his imprisoned father, hears, in his home and all around him, the roar of tempest and of wreck. After an active generation which has suffered and created, comes the poetic generation which writes, paints or models. It expresses and amplifies the energies and desires of a society founded by its fathers. Hence it is that Flemish art proceeds to glorify in heroic types the sensual instincts, the grand and gross joyousness, the rude energy of surrounding mortals, and to find in the alehouse of Teniers the Olympus of Rubens.

Among these painters there is one who seems to

efface the rest; indeed no name in the history of art is greater, and there are only three or four as great. But Rubens is not an isolated genius, the number as well as the resemblance of surrounding talents showing that the efflorescence of which he is the most beautiful emanation is the product of his time and people. Before him there was Adam Van Noort, his master,* and the master of Jordaens; around him are his contemporaries, educated in other studios, and whose invention is as spontaneous as his own—Jordaens, Crayer, Gerard Zeghers, Rombouts, Abraham Janssens, and Van Roose; after him come his pupils—Van Thulden, Diepenbecke, Van den Hoeck, Corneille Schut, Boyermans, Van Dyck, the greatest of all, and Van Oost of Bruges; alongside of him are the great animal, flower and still-life painters—Snyders, John Fyt, the Jesuit Seghers, and an entire school of famous engravers—Soutman, Vorsterman, Bolswert, Pontius and Vischer; the same sap fructifies all these branches, the lesser as well as the greater, while we must add, again, the perva-

* See the admirable "Miraculous Draft," by Van Noort, in St. James at Antwerp.

ding sympathies and the national admiration. It is plain that an art like this is not the effect of one accidental cause but of a general development, and of this we have full assurance when, considering the work itself, we remark the concordances which assimilate it with its *milieu.*

On the one side it resumes or follows the traditions of Italy, and is seen at a glance to be pagan and Catholic. It is supported by churches and convents; it represents Biblical and evangelical scenes; the subject is edifying; and the engraver deliberately places at the bottom of his engravings pious maxims and moral problems. And yet, in fact, there is nothing Christian about it but its name; all mystic or ascetic sentiment is banished; its Madonnas, martyrs and confessors, its Christs and apostles are superb florid bodies restricted to the life of the flesh; its paradise is an Olympus of well-fed Flemish deities revelling in muscular activity; they are large, vigorous, plump and content, and make a jovial and magnificent display as in a national festival or at a princely entry. The Church, it is true, baptizes this last flower of the old mythology with

becoming forms, but it is only baptism, and this is frequently wanting. Apollos, Jupiters, Castors, Pollux and Venus, all the ancient divinities, revive under their veritable names in the palaces of the kings and the great which they decorate. This is owing to religion, here as in Italy, consisting of rites. Rubens goes to mass every morning, and presents a picture in order to obtain indulgences; after which he falls back upon his own poetic feeling for natural life and, in the same style, paints a lusty Magdalen and a plump Siren; under the Catholic varnish the heart and the intellect, all social ways and observances are pagan. On the other side, this art is truly Flemish; everything issues from and centres on a mother idea which is new and national; it is harmonious, spontaneous and original; in this respect it contrasts with the foregoing which is only a discordant imitation. From Greece to Florence, from Florence to Venice, from Venice to Antwerp, every step of the passage can be traced. The conception of man and of life goes on decreasing in nobleness and increasing in breadth. Rubens is to Titian what Titian was to Raphael, and Raphael to

Phidias. Never did artistic sympathy clasp nature in such an open and universal embrace. Ancient boundaries, already often extended, seem removed purposely to expose an infinite career. There is no respect for historic proprieties; he groups together allegoric with real figures, and cardinals with a naked Mercury. There is no deference to the moral order; he fills the ideal heaven of mythology and of the gospel with coarse or mischievous characters; a Magdalen resembling a nurse, and a Ceres whispering some pleasant gossip in her neighbor's ear. There is no dread of exciting physical sensibility; he pushes the horrible to extremes, athwart all the tortures for the punishment of the flesh and all the contortions of howling agony. There is no fear of offending moral delicacy; his Minerva is a shrew who can fight, his Judith a butcher's wife familiar with blood, and his Paris a jocose expert and a dainty amateur. To translate into words the ideas vociferously proclaimed by his Suzannas, his Magdalens, his St. Sebastians, his Graces and his Sirens, in all his *kermesses*, divine and human, ideal or real, Christian or pagan, would require the terms

of Rabelais. Through him all the animal instincts of human nature appear on the stage; those which had been excluded as gross he reproduces as true, and in him as in nature they encounter the others. Nothing is wanting but the pure and the noble; the whole of human nature is in his grasp, save the loftiest heights. Hence it is that his creativeness is the vastest we have seen, comprehending as it does all types, Italian cardinals, Roman emperors, contemporary citizens, peasants and cowherds, along with the innumerable diversities stamped on humanity by the play of natural forces and which more than fifteen hundred pictures did not suffice to exhaust.

For the same reason, in the representation of the body, he comprehended more profoundly than any one the essential characteristic of organic life; he surpasses in this the Venetians, as they surpass the Florentines; he feels still better than they that flesh is a changeable substance in a constant state of renewal; and such, more than any other, is the Flemish body, lympathic, sanguine and voracious, more fluid, more rapidly tending to accretion and

waste than those whose dry fibre and radical temperance preserve permanent tissues. Hence it is that nobody has depicted its contrasts in stronger relief, nor as visibly shown the decay and bloom of life—at one time the dull flabby corpse, a genuine clinical mass, empty of blood and substance, livid, blue and mottled through suffering, a clot of blood on the mouth, the eye glassy and the feet and hands clayish, swollen and deformed because death seized them first; at another the freshness of living carnations, the handsome, blooming and smiling athlete, the mellow suppleness of a yielding torso in the form of a well-fed adolescent, the soft rosy cheeks and placid candor of a girl whose blood was never quickened or eyes bedimmed by thought, flocks of dimpled cherubs and merry cupids, the delicacy, the folds, the exquisite melting rosiness of infantile skin, seemingly the petal of a flower moistened with dew and impregnated with morning light. In like manner in the representation of soul and action he appreciated more keenly than any one the essential feature of animal and moral life, that is to say the instantaneous movement which it is the aim of the plastic arts to

seize on the wing. In this again he surpasses the Venetians as they surpassed the Florentines. Nobody has endowed figures with such spirit, with a gesture so impulsive, with an impetuosity so abandoned and furious, such an universal commotion and tempest of swollen and writhing muscles in one single effort. His personages speak; their repose itself is suspended on the verge of action; we feel what they have just accomplished and what they are about to do. The present with them is impregnated with the past and big with the future; not only the whole face but the entire attitude conspires to manifest the flowing stream of their thought, feeling and complete being; we hear the inward utterance of their emotion; we might repeat the words to which they give expression. The most fleeting and most subtle shades of sentiment belong to Rubens; in this respect he is a treasure for novelist and psychologist; he took note of the passing refinements of moral expression as well as of the soft volume of sanguine flesh; no one has gone beyond him in knowledge of the living organism and of the animal man. Endowed with this sentiment and skill he was capable, in conformity with

the aspirations and needs of his restored nation, of amplifying the forces he found around and within himself, all that underlie, preserve and manifest the overflow and triumph of existence; on the one hand gigantic joints, herculean shapes and shoulders, red and colossal muscles, bearded and truculent heads, over-nourished bodies teeming with succulence, the luxurious display of white and rosy flesh; on the other, the rude instincts which impel human nature to seek food, drink, strife and pleasure, the savage fury of the combatant, the enormity of the big-bellied Silenus, the sensual joviality of the Faun, the abandonment of that lovely creature without conscience and "fat with sin," the boldness, the energy, the broad joyousness, the native goodness, the organic serenity of the national type. He heightens these effects again through their composition and the accessories with which he surrounds them—magnificence of lustrous silks, embroidered simarres and golden brocades, groups of naked figures, modern costumes and antique draperies, an inexhaustible accumulation of arms, standards, colonnades, Venetian stairways, temples, canopies, ships, animals, and

ever novel and imposing scenery, as if outside of ordinary nature he possessed the key of a thousand times richer nature, whereon his magician's hand could forever draw without the freedom of his imagination ending in confusion, but on the contrary with a jet so vigorous and a prodigality so national that his most complicated productions seem like the irresistible outflow of a surfeited brain. Like an Indian deity at leisure he relieves his fecundity by creating worlds, and from the matchless folds and hues of his tossed simarres to the snowy whites of his flesh, or the pale silkiness of his blonde tresses, there is no tone in any of his canvasses which does not appear there purposely to afford him delight.

There is only one Rubens in Flanders, as there is only one Shakespeare in England. Great as the others are, they are deficient in some one element of his genius. Crayer has not his audacity nor his excess; he paints beauty calm,* sympathetic and content along with requisite effects of bright and mellow color. Jordaens has not his regal grandeur

* See at Ghent his "St. Rosalie," at Bruges his "Adoration of the Shepherds," and at Rennes his "Lazarus."

and his heroic poetic feeling; he paints with vinous color stunted colossi, crowded groups and turbulent plebeians. Van Dyck has not, like him, the love of power and of life for life itself; more refined, more chivalric, born with a sensitive and even melancholy nature, elegiac in his sacred subjects, aristocratic in his portraits, he depicts with less glowing and more sympathetic color noble, tender and charming figures whose generous and delicate souls are filled with sweet and sad emotions unknown to his master.* His works are the first indication of the coming change. After 1660 he is already prominent. The generation whose energy and aspirations had inspired the grand picturesque revery, faded away man by man; Crayer and Jordaens alone, by merely living, kept art up for twenty years. The nation, reviving for a moment, falls backward; its renaissance never perfects itself. The archducal sovereigns, through whom it had become an independent state, ended in 1633; it reverts back to a Spanish province under a governor sent from Madrid. The treaty of 1648 closes the Scheldt to it, and completes

* See, especially, his sacred works at Malines and Antwerp.

the ruin of her commerce. Louis XIV. dismembers her, and on three occasions deprives her of portions of her territory. Four successive wars trample over her for thirty years; friends and enemies, Spaniards, French, English and Hollanders live upon her; the treaties of 1715 convert the Dutch into her purveyors and tax-gatherers. At this moment, become Austrian, she refuses the subsidy; but the elders of the states are imprisoned, and the chief one, Anneessens, dies on the scaffold; this is the last and a feeble echo of the mighty voice of Van Artevelde. Henceforth the country subsides into a simple province in which people keep soul and body together and only care to live. At the same time, and through a reaction, the national imagination declines. The school of Rubens degenerates; with Beyermans, Van Herp, John Erasmus Quellin, the second Van Oost, Deyster and John Van Orley we see originality and energy disappearing; coloring grows weak or becomes affected; attenuated types incline to prettiness; expression is either sentimental or mawkish; the personages occupying the great canvas, instead of filling it are dispersed, the intervals being supplied

with architecture; the vein is exhausted; painting is mere routine or a mannered imitation of the Italian school. Many betake themselves to foreign countries. Philippe de Champagne is director of the Academy of the Fine Arts at Paris and becomes French in mind and country; still more, a spiritualist and Jansenist, a conscientious and skilful painter of grave and thoughtful spirit. Gerard de Lairesse becomes a disciple of the Italians—a classic, academic and erudite painter of costume and historic and mythologic resemblances. The logical reason assumes empire in the arts, having already obtained it in social matters. Two pictures in the Musée of Ghent equally display the change in painting and the change in society. Both represent princely entrêes, one in 1666 and the other in 1717. The first, of a beautiful ruddy tone, shows the last of the men of the grand epoch, their cavalier air, their powerful frame, their capacity for physical endeavor, their rich decorative costumes, their horses with with flowing manes—here nobles related to Van Dyck's seigniors, and there pikemen in buff and cuirass kindred to the soldiers of Wallestein—in

short, the last remains of the heroic and picturesque age. The second, cold and pale in tone, shows highly refined, softened, Frenchified beings—gentlemen clever at salutation, women of fashion conscious of their appearance, in brief, the imported drawing-room system and foreign modes of demeanor. During the fifty years separating the former from the latter both the national art and the national spirit vanished.

IV.

Whilst the Southern provinces, henceforth subject and Catholic, followed the Italian road in art, and represented on their canvasses the mythological epos of the grand and heroic nude figure, the provinces of the North, becoming free and Protestant, developed their life and art in another direction. The climate is more rainy and colder, and for this reason the presence of the nude is a rarer and less sympathetic thing. The Germanic race is chaster, and through this quality the mind is less inclined to appreciate classic art, as it was conceived of by the Italian renaissance. Life is more difficult, more laborious, and more economic; man, therefore, accustomed to effort, to forethought and to a methodical self-government, has more trouble in comprehending the fascinating dream of a sensuous and full-blown existence. We can imagine the Dutch citizen in his home after the day's toil at his business. His dwelling consists of small apartments, some-

what resembling the state-rooms of a ship; it would be a troublesome matter to suspend on the walls the large pictures decorating the saloons of an Italian palace; its owner's chief requirements are cleanliness and comfort; with these he is content and does not insist on decoration. According to the Venetian ambassadors, "they are so moderate that, even with the richest, one sees no unusual pomp or luxury. . . . . They make no use of retainers or silken habits, very little silver-ware, and no tapestry in their houses; the household numbers a very few and is very limited. Outside and inside, in dress and in other matters, all maintain the true moderation of small fortunes, nothing superfluous being perceptible."* When the Earl of Leicester came to take command in Holland in the name of Elizabeth, and Spinola arrived to negotiate peace for the King of Spain, their regal magnificence formed a striking contrast and even provoked scandal. The head of the republic, William the Taciturn, the hero of the age, wore an old mantle which a student would have pro-

* Motley's "United Netherlands," Vol. IV. p. 551. Report of Contarini, 1609.

nounced threadbare, with a pourpoint like it, unbuttoned, and a woollen waistcoat resembling that of a bargeman. In the next century the adversary of Louis XIV., the grand pensioner John de Witt kept only one domestic; everybody could approach him; he imitated his illustrious predecessor, who lived cheek-by-jowl with "brewers and bourgeois." We find yet at the present day, in their social ways, many an indication of ancient sobriety. It is clear that with such characters there is but little room for the decorative and voluptuous instincts which elsewhere in Europe fashioned aristocratic show, and rendered comprehensible the pagan poesy of beautiful bodies.

The opposite instincts, in effect, predominate. Relieved of the drawback of the Southern provinces, Holland, at the end of the sixteenth century, suddenly and with extraordinary energy turns in the direction of its natural proclivities. Primitive inclinations and faculties appear with the most striking results; they are not a new birth, but simply a revelation. Good observers had detected them a hundred and fifty years before. "Friesland is

free," said Pope Æneas Sylvius,* "lives in her own fashion, will not endure foreign empire, and has no desire to dominate over others. The Frieslander does not hesitate to face death in behalf of liberty. This spirited people, used to arms, of large and robust frames, calm and intrepid in disposition, glories in her freedom notwithstanding that Philip, Duke of Burgundy, proclaims himself lord of the country. They detest military and feudal arrogance, and tolerate no man who seeks to raise his head above his fellows. Their magistrates are elected annually by themselves, and are obliged to administer public matters with equity. . . . They severely punish licentiousness among women . . . They scarcely admit an unmarried priest lest he should corrupt the wife of another, regarding continence as a difficult thing and beyond the natural powers." Every Germanic conception of state, marriage and religion are here visible in germ, and forecast the final flowering of the republic and of Protestantism. Subjected to trial by Philip II. they offer to sacrifice beforehand "their lives and

* Cosmographia, p. 421

their property." A small population of traders, lost on a mud-heap at the extremity of an empire more vast and more feared than that of Napoleon, resisted, subsisted and increased under the weight of the colossus who tried to crush her. Their sieges are all admirable; citizens and women, supported by a few hundreds of soldiers, arrest an entire army before ruined ramparts, the best troops in Europe, the greatest generals and the most skilful engineers; and this remnant of emaciated people, after feeding on rats, boiled leaves and leather for months, determine, rather than surrender, to place the infirm in the centre of a square and go forth to die in the intrenchments of the enemy. The details of this war must be read in order to realize the extent to which man's patience, coolness and energy may be carried.* On the sea a Dutch vessel is blown up rather than strike its flag, while their voyages of discovery, colonization and conquest, in Nova Zembla, India and Brazil, by the way of the Straits of Magellan, are as magnificent as their

* Among others the capture of Bois-le-Duc by Héraugière and sixty nine volunteers.

combats. The more we demand of human nature the more she gives; her faculties are exalted in their exercise, while the limits to her power of doing and suffering are no longer perceptible. Finally, in 1609, after thirty years warfare, the cause is won. Spain recognizes their independence, and during the whole of the seventeenth century they are to play a most prominent part in the affairs of Europe. No power can make them yield, neither Spain during a second war of twenty-seven years, nor Cromwell, nor Charles II., nor England combined with France, nor the fresh and formidable power of Louis XIV.; after three wars their ambassadors are all to be seen in humble and fruitless entreaty at Gertruydenberg, and the grand-pensioner Heinsius, is to become one of the three potentates to control the destinies of Europe.

Internally their government is as good as their external position is exalted. For the first time in the world conscience is free and the rights of the citizens are respected. Their state consists of a community of provinces voluntarily united, which, each within its own borders, maintains with a degree of

perfection unknown till then the security of the public and the liberty of the individual. "They all love liberty," says Parival in 1660; "no one among them is allowed to beat or abuse another, while the women servants have so many privileges their masters, even, dare not strike them." Full of his admiration, he repeatedly insists on this wonderful respect for human personality. "There is not to-day a province in the world which enjoys so much liberty as Holland, with so just a harmony that the little cannot be imposed upon by the great, nor the poor by the rich and opulent . . . The moment a seignior brings into this country any serfs or slaves they are free; yes, and the money he laid out in their purchase is lost . . . The inhabitants of a village having paid what they owe are as free as the inhabitants of a city . . . And above all each is king in his own house, it being a very serious crime to have done violence to a bourgeois in his own domicile." Everybody can leave the country when he pleases, and take all the money he pleases with him. The roads are safe day and night even for a man traveling alone. The master is not allowed to retain a domestic

against his will. Nobody is troubled on account of his religion. One is free to say what he chooses, "even of the magistrates," and to denounce them. Equality is fundamental. "Those who hold office obtain consideration rather through fair dealing than advance themselves over others by a proud bearing." A nation like this cannot fail to be prosperous; when man is both just and energetic the rest comes to him as surplus. At the beginning of the War of Independence the population of Amsterdam was 70,000; in 1618 it was 300,000. The Venetian ambassadors reported that people swarmed in the streets every hour of the day as at a fair. The city increased two-thirds; a surface equal to the size of a man's foot was worth a gold ducat. The country is as good as the city. Nowhere is the peasant so rich and so able to derive advantage from the soil; one village possesses four thousand cows; an ox weighs two thousand pounds. A farmer offers his daughter to Prince Maurice with a dowry of one hundred thousand florins. Nowhere are industrial pursuits and manufactures so perfect; cloths, mirrors, sugar-refineries, porcelain, pottery, rich stuffs of silk, satin and

brocade, iron-ware and ship-rigging. They supply Europe with half of its luxuries and nearly all its transportation. A thousand vessels traverse the Baltic in quest of raw material. Eight hundred boats are engaged in the herring fishery. Vast companies monopolize trade with India, China and Japan; Batavia is the centre of a Dutch empire; at this moment, 1609, Holland on the sea and in the world is what England was in the time of Napoleon. She has a marine of one hundred thousand sailors; in war time she can man two thousand vessels; fifty years after she maintains herself against the combined fleets of France and England; year after year the great stream of her success and prosperity is seen to increase. But its source is yet more bountiful than the stream itself; that which sustains her is an excess of courage, reason, abnegation, will and genius; "this people," say the Venetian ambassadors, "are inclined to labor and industry to such a degree that no enterprise is too difficult for them to succeed in . . . They are born for work and for privation, and all are doing something, some one way and some another." Much production and light con-

sumption is the mode of growth of public prosperity The poorest, "in their small and humble habitations," have all necessary things. The richest in their fine houses avoid the superfluous and ostentation; nobody is in want, and nobody abuses; every one is employed with his hands or his mind. "All things are made profitable," says Parival; "there are none, even to those who gather ordure out of the canals who do not earn half-a-crown a day. Children even who are learning their trades almost earn their bread at the start. They are so inimical to bad government and to indolence that they have places in which the magistrates imprison idlers and vagabonds, also those who do not properly attend to their business—the complaints of wives or family relations being a sufficient warrant, and in these places they are obliged to work and earn their subsistence whether they will or not." The convents are transformed into hospitals, asylums and homes for orphans, the former revenues of lazy monks supporting invalids, the aged, and widows and children of soldiers and sailors lost in war. The army is so efficient that any of its soldiers might serve as

captain in an Italian army, while no Italian captain would be admitted in it as a common soldier. In culture and instruction, as well as in the arts of organization and of government, the Dutch are two centuries ahead of the rest of Europe. Scarcely a man, woman or child can be found who does not know how to read and write (1609). Every village has a public school. In a bourgeois family all the boys read Latin and all the girls French. Many people write and converse in several foreign languages. It is not owing to simple precaution, to habits of laying up and calculations of utility, but they appreciate the dignity of science. Leyden, to which the States-General propose a recompense, after its heroic defense, demands a University; no pains are spared to attract to it the greatest savans of Europe. The States themselves unite, and through Henry IV. cause letters to be sent to Scaliger, who is poor and a professor, begging him to honor the city with his presence; no lessons will be required of him; they merely wish him to come and converse with the erudites, direct their efforts, and allow the nation to participate in the fame of his writings. Under this

regime Leyden becomes the most renowned schoo. in Europe; she has two thousand students; philosophy hunted out of France finds refuge there; during the seventeenth century Holland is the first of thoughtful countries. The positive sciences here find their native soil, or the land of their adoption. Scaliger, Justus Lepsius, Saumaisius, Meursius, the two Heinsius, the two Dousa, Marnix de Ste-Aldegonde, Hugo Grotius and Snellius preside over learning, laws, physics and mathematics. The Elzevirs carry on printing. Lindshoten and Mercator furnish instruction to travellers and develop geographical science. Hooft, Bor and Meteren write the history of the nation. Jacob Cats provides its poetry. Theology, which is the philosophy of the day, takes up, with Arminius and Gomar, the question of grace, and, even in the smallest villages, agitates the minds of peasants and bourgeois. The Synod of Dordrecht at length in 1609 constitutes the œcumenical council of the Reformation. To this primacy of speculative intellect add that of practical genius: from Barnevelt to De Witt, from William the Taciturn to William III., from Heems-

kerck the admiral to Von Tromp and De Ruyter, a sequence of superior men are at the head of art and business matters. It is under these circumstances that the national art appears. All the great original painters are born in the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, after grave danger had passed away, when the final victory was assured, when man, sensible of great things accomplished, points out to his children the onward path which has been cleared by his vigorous arm and stout heart. Here, as elsewhere, the artist is the offspring of the hero. The faculties employed in the creation of a real world, now that the work is accomplished, reach beyond and are employed in the creation of an imaginary world. Man has done too much to go back to school; the field spread out before him and around him has been peopled by his activity; it is so glorious and so fecund he can long dwell upon and admire it; he need no longer subdue his own thought to a foreign thought; he seeks and discovers his own peculiar sentiment; he dares to confide himself to it, to pursue it to the end, to imitate nobody, to derive all from himself, to invent with no

other guide but the voiceless preferences of his own senses and his own affections. His inner forces, his fundamental aptitudes, his primitive and hereditary instincts drawn out and fortified by experience continue to operate after his experience, and, when they have formed a nation they form an art.

Let us consider this art. It manifests through colors and forms all the instincts that have just appeared in actions and in works. So long as the seven provinces of the North and the ten provinces of the South formed but one nation they had but one school of art. Engelbrecht, Lucas of Leyden, John Schoreel, the elder Heemskerck, Corneille of Harlem, Bloemaert and Goltzius paint in the same style as their contemporaries of Bruges and Antwerp. There is not as yet a distinct Dutch school, because there is not as yet a distinct Belgian school. At the time when the War of Independence begins the painters of the North are laboring to convert themselves into Italians like the painters of the South. After the year 1600, however, there is a complete change in painting as in other things. The rising sap of the nation gives predominance to the national instincts.

Nudities are no longer visible; the ideal figure, the beautiful human animal living in full sunshine, the noble symmetry of limbs and attitude, the grand allegoric or mythological picture is no longer adapted to Germanic taste. Calvanism, moreover, which now rules, excludes it from its temples, and amidst this population of earnest and economic laborers there is no seigneurial display, no widespread and grandiose epicureanism which, elsewhere, in the palaces and in proximity to luxurious silver, liveries and furniture, demands the sensual and pagan canvas. When Amelia of Solm desires to raise a monument in this style to her husband, the stadtholder Frederic Henry, she is obliged to send to Orangesaal for the Flemish artists Van Thulden and Jordaens. To these realistic imaginations and amidst these republican customs, in this land where a shoemaking privateer can become vice-admiral, the most interesting figure is one of its own citizens, a man of flesh and blood, not draped or undraped like a Greek, but in his own costume and ordinary attitude, some good magistrate or valiant officer. The heroic style is suited to but one thing, the great portraits which decorate the

town-halls and public institutions in commemoration of services rendered. We see, in fact, a new kind of picture make its appearance here, the vast canvas on which are displayed five, ten, twenty and thirty full-length portraits as large as life, hospital directors, arquebusiers on target excursions, syndics assembled around a table, officers offering toasts at a banquet, professors giving clinical lectures, all grouped according to their pursuits, and all presented to view with the costume, arms, banners, accessories and surroundings belonging to their actual life; it is a veritable historical picture, the most instructive and most impressive of all, where Franz Hals, Rembrandt, Govaêrt Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, Theodore de Keyser and John Ravenstein depict the heroic age of their nation, where sensible, energetic and loyal heads possess the nobleness of power and of conscience, where the fine costume of the renaissance, the scarfs, the buff vests, the frills, the lace collars, the pourpoints and the black mantles throw their gravity and brilliancy around the solid portliness of the stout forms and frank expressions of the faces, where the artist, now through the virile simplicity of his

means, now through the strength of his convictions, becomes the equal of his heroes.

Such is painting for the public; there now remains painting for private life, that which decorates the houses of individuals, and which, in its dimensions as well as subjects, conforms to the condition and character of its purchasers. "There is no bourgeois so poor," says Parival, "who does not liberally indulge his taste this way." A baker pays six hundred florins for a single figure by Van der Meer of Delft. This, along with a neat and agreeable interior, constitutes their luxury; "they do not grudge money in this direction, which they rather save on their stomachs." The national instinct re-appears here the same as revealed in the first epoch with John Van Eyck, Quintin Matsys, and Lucas of Leyden; and it is emphatically the national instinct, for it is so deep and so active that, even in Belgium, in close proximity to mythological and decorative art, it runs through the Breughels and Teniers like a small brook alongside of a broad river. It exacts and provokes the representation of man as he is and life as it is, both as the eye encounters them, citizens,

peasants, cattle, shops, taverns, rooms, streets and landscapes. There is no need to transform them in order to ennoble them; they are satisfied if they are worthy of interest. Nature, in herself, whatever she may be, whether human, animal, vegetable or inanimate, with all her irregularities, minutiæ and omissions, is inherently right, and, when comprehended, people love and delight to contemplate her. The object of art is not to change her, but to interpret her; through sympathy it renders her beautiful. Thus understood, painting may represent the housekeeper spinning in her rural cot, the carpenter planing on his work-bench, the surgeon dressing a rustic's arm, the cook spitting a chicken, the rich dame washing herself; all sorts of interiors, from the hovel to the drawing-room; all sorts of types, from the rubicund visage of the deep drinker to the placid smile of the well-bred damsel; every scene of refined or rustic life—a card-party in a gilded saloon, a peasant's carouse in a bare tavern, skaters on a frozen canal, cows drinking from a trough, vessels at sea, the entire and infinite diversities of sky, earth, water, darkness and daylight. Terburg, Metzu, Gerard

Dow, Van der Meer of Delft, Adrian Brouwer, Schalcken, Franz Mieris, Jan Steen, Wouverman, the two Ostades, Wynants, Cuyp, Van der Neer, Ruysdael, Hobbema, Paul Potter, Backhuysen, the two Vanderveldes, Philip of Kœnig, Van der Heyden, and how many more! There is no school in which artists of original talent are so numerous. When the domain of art consists, not of a small summit, but of the wide expanse of life, it offers to each mind a distinct field; the ideal is narrow, and inhabited only by two or three geniuses; the real is immense, and provides places for fifty men of talent. A tranquil and pleasing harmony emanates from all these performances. We are conscious of repose in looking at them. The spirit of the artist, like that of his figures, is in equilibrium; we should be quite content and comfortable in his picture. We realize that his imagination does not go beyond. It seems as if he, like his personages, were satisfied with mere living. Nature appears to him excellent; all he cares for is to add some arrangement, some tone side by side with another, some effect of light, some choice of attitude. In her presence he is like a happy-wedded

Hollander in the presence of his spouse; he would not wish her otherwise; he loves her through affectionate routine and innate concordance; at the utmost his chief requirement of her will be to wear at some festival her red frock instead of the blue one. He bears no resemblance to our painters, expert observers taught by æsthetic and philosophic books and journals, who depict the peasant and the laborer the same as the Turk and the Arab, that is to say, as curious animals and interesting specimens; who charge their landscapes with the subtleties, refinements and emotions of poets and civilians in order to rid themselves of the mute and dreamy revery of life. He is of a more näive order; he is not dislocated or over-excited by excessive cerebral activity; as compared to us he is an artizan; when he takes up painting he has none other than picturesque intentions; he is less affected by unforeseen and striking detail than by simple and leading general traits. His work, on this account, healthier and less poignant, appeals to less cultivated natures, and pleases the greater number. Among all these painters, two only—Ruysdael, in spiritual finesse and

marked superiority of education, and Rembrandt especially, in a peculiar structure of the eye and a wonderfully wild genius—developed, beyond their age and nation, up to the common instincts which bind the Germanic nations together and pave the way for modern sentiments. The latter, constantly collecting his materials, living in solitude and borne along by the growth of an extraordinary faculty, lived, like our Balzac, a magician and a visionary in a world fashioned by his own hand and of which he alone possessed the key. Superior to all painters in the native delicacy and keenness of his optical perceptions, he comprehended this truth and adhered to it in all its consequences that, to the eye, the essence of a visible object consists of the spot (*tache*), that the simplest color is infinitely complex, that every visual sensation is the product of its elements coupled with its surroundings, that each object on the field of sight is but a single spot modified by others, and that, in this wise, the principal feature of a picture is the ever-present, tremulous, colored atmosphere into which figures are plunged like fishes in the sea. He rendered this atmosphere palpable,

and revealed to us its mysterious and thronging population; he impregnated it with the light of his own country—a feeble, yellow illumination like that of a lamp in a cellar; he felt the mournful struggle between it and shadow, the weakness of vanishing rays dying away in gloom, the tremulousness of reflections vainly clinging to gleaming walls, the sum of that vague multitude of half-darks which, invisible to ordinary gaze, seem in his paintings and etchings to form a submarine world dimly visible through an abyss of waters. On emerging from this obscurity the full light, to his eyes, proved a dazzling shower; he felt as if it were flashes of lightning, or some magical effulgence, or as myriads of beaming darts. He found accordingly, in the inanimate world the completest and most expressive drama, all contrasts and all conflicts, whatever is overwhelming and painfully lugubrious in night, whatever is most fleeting and saddest in ambiguous shadow, whatever is most violent and most irresistible in the irruption of daylight. This done, all that remained was to impose the human drama on the natural drama; a stage thus fashioned indicates of itself its own characters.

The Greeks and Italians had known of man and of life only the straightest and tallest stems, the healthy flower blooming in sunshine; he saw the root, everything which crawls and moulders in shadow, the stunted and deformed sprouts, the obscure crowd of the poor, the Jewry of Amsterdam, the slimy, suffering populace of a large city and unfavorable climate, the bandy-legged beggar, the bloated idiot, the bald skull of an exhausted craftsman, the pallid features of the sick, the whole of that grovelling array of evil passions and hideous miseries which infest our various civilizations like worms in a rotten plank. Once on this road he could comprehend the religion of grief, the genuine Christianity; he could interpret the Bible as if he were a Lollard; he could recognize the eternal Christ as present now as formerly, as living in a cellar or tavern of Holland as beneath a Jerusalem sun; the healer and consoler of the miserable, alone capable of saving them because as poor and as miserable as themselves. He too, through a reaction, was conscious of pity; by the side of others who seem painters of the aristocracy he is of the people; he

is, at least, the most humane; his broader sympathies embrace more of nature fundamentally; no ugliness repels him, no craving for joyousness or nobleness hides from him the lowest depths of truth. Hence it is that, free of all trammels and guided by the keen sensibility of his organs, he has succeeded in portraying in man not merely the general structure and the abstract type which answers for classic art, but again that which is peculiar and profound in the individual, the infinite and indefinable complications of the moral being, the whole of that changeable imprint which concentrates instantaneously on a face the entire history of a soul and which Shakespeare alone saw with an equally prodigious lucidity. In this respect he is the most original of modern artists, and forges one end of the chain of which the Greeks forged the other; the rest of the masters, Florentine, Venetian and Flemish, stand between them; and when, nowadays, our over-excited sensibility, our extravagant curiosity in the pursuit of subtleties, our unsparing search of the true, our divination of the remote and the obscure in human nature, seeks for predecessors and

masters, it is in him and in Shakespeare that Balzac and Delacroix are able to find them.

A blooming period like this is transient for the reason that the sap which produces it is exhausted by its production. Towards 1667, after the naval defeats of England, slight indications show the growing change in the manners, customs and sentiments which had stimulated the national art. The prosperity is too great. Already, in 1660, Parival, speaking of this, grows ecstatic in every chapter; the companies of the East and West Indies declare dividends to their stockholders of forty and fifty per cent. Heroes become citizens; Parival notices the thirst for gain among those of the highest class. And more, "they detest duels, contentions and quarrels, and commonly assert that well-off people never fight." They want to enjoy themselves, and the houses of the great, which the Venetian ambassadors early in the century find so bare and so simple, become luxurious; among the leading citizens there are found tapestries, high-priced pictures and "gold and silver-plate." The rich interiors of Terburg and Metzu show us the new-found elegance—the light

silk dresses, velvet bodices, the gems, the pearls, the hangings honey-combed with gold, and the lofty chimneys with marble columns. Ancient energy relaxes. When Louis XIV. invades the country in 1672 he finds no resistance. The army has been neglected; their troops are disbanded; their towns surrender at the first blow; four French cavaliers take Muyden which is the key to the floodgates; the States-General implore peace on any terms. The national sentiment degenerates, at the same time, in the arts. Taste becomes transformed. Rembrandt in 1669 dies poor, almost without anybody's knowledge; the new-found luxury is satisfied with foreign models obtained from France and Italy. Already, during the most flourishing epoch, a number of painters had gone to Rome to paint small figures and landscapes; Jan Both, Berghem, Karl Dujardin, and many others—Wouvermans himself—form a half-Italian school alongside of the national school. But this school was spontaneous and natural; amid the mountains, ruins, structures and rags of the South the vapory whiteness of the atmosphere, the geniality of the figures, the mellow carnations, the gayety

and good humor of the painter denote the persistency and freedom of the Dutch instinct. On the other hand, we see at this moment this instinct becoming enfeebled under the invasion of fashion. On the Kaisergracht and the Heeregracht rise grand hotels in the style of Louis XIV., while the Flemish painter who founded the academic school, Gerard de Lairesse, comes to decorate them with his learned allegories and hybrid mythologies. The national art, it is true, does not at once surrender; it is prolonged by a succession of masterpieces up to the first years of the eighteenth century; at the same time the national sentiment, aroused by humiliation and danger, excites a popular revolution, heroic sacrifices, the inundation of the country, and all the successes which afterwards ensue. But these very successes complete the ruin of the energy and enthusiasm which this temporary revival had stimulated. During the whole of the war of the Spanish succession, Holland, whose stadtholder became King of England, is sacrificed to its ally; after the treaty of 1713 she loses her maritime supremacy, falls to the second rank of powers, and, finally, still lower

Frederic the Great is soon able to say that she is dragged in the wake of England like a sloop behind a man-of-war. France tramples on her during the war of the Austrian succession; later, England imposes on her the right of search and deprives her of the coast of Coromandel. Finally, Prussia steps in, overwhelms the republican party and establishes the stadtholdership. Like all the weak she is hustled by the strong, and, after 1789, conquered and reconquered. What is worse she gives up and is content to remain a good commercial banking-house. Already in 1723 her historian, John Leclerc, a refugee, openly ridicules the valiant seamen who, during the War of Independence, blew themselves up rather than strike their flag.* In 1732, another historian declares that "the Dutch think of nothing but the accumulation of riches." After 1748 both the army and the fleet are allowed to decline. In 1787 the Duke of Brunswick brings the country under subjection almost without striking a blow. What a distance between sentiments of this cast and those of

* "This good captain belonged to those who die for fear of dying. If God forgives such people it is because they are out of their mind."

the companions of William the Taciturn, De Ruyter and Von Tromp! Hence it is that, through an admirable concordance, we see picturesque invention terminating with practical energy. In ten years after the commencement of the eighteenth century all the great painters are dead. Already for a generation a decline is manifest in the impoverished style, in the more limited imagination and in more minute finish of Franz Mieris, Schalcken, and the rest. One of these, Adrian Van der Werf, in his cold and polished painting, his mythologies and nudities, his ivory carnations, his impotent return to the Italian style, bears witness to the Dutch oblivion of native tastes and its own peculiar genius. His successors resemble men who attempt to speak with nothing to say; brought up by masters or famous parents, Peter Van der Werf, Henry Van Limborch, Philip Van Dyck, Mieris the younger, and another the grandson, Nicholas Verkolie, and Constantine Netscher repeat sentences they have heard, but like automatons. Talent survives only among painters of accessories and flowers—Jacques de Witt, Rachel Ruysch and Van Huysum—in a small way, which

requires less invention and which still lasts a few years, similar to a tenacious clump of bushes on a dry soil whereon all the great trees have died. This dies in its turn, and the ground remains vacant. It is the last evidence of the dependence which attaches individual originality to social life, and proportions the inventive faculties of the artist to the active energies of the nation.

ART

IN

GREECE

TO

HENRI LEHMANN.

PAINTER.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The translator has to express his grateful acknowledgments to Mr. Bryant for translations of the several passages quoted by the author from the Odyssey, kindly furnished by him in advance of the publication of his version of that poem; also for the translation of an Olympic chorus from the original Greek on page 497

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RACE.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN GREECE.

INTRODUCTION.

GENTLEMEN:—In preceding years I have presented to you the history of the two great original schools which, in modern times, have treated the human form, those of Italy and the Netherlands. I have now to complete this study by familiarizing you with the greatest and most original of all, the ancient Greek school. This time I shall not discourse on painting. Excepting a few vases, some mosaics and the small mural decorations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, the antique monuments of painting have all perished; we cannot speak of them with certainty. Besides, in the display of the human form, there was in Greece a more national art, one better adapted to their social ways and public spirit, and probably more cultivated and more perfect, that

of sculpture; Greek sculpture, accordingly, will be the subject of this course.

Unfortunately, in this, as in all other directions, antiquity is simply a ruin. The remains that have come down to us of antique statuary are almost nothing alongside of what has perished. We are reduced to two heads,* by which to conjecture the colossal divinities in whom the great century had expressed its thought and whose majesty filled the temples. We have no authentic work by Phidias; we know nothing of Myron, Polycleitus, Praxitiles, Scopas and Lysippus except through copies and more or less remote and doubtful imitations. The beautiful statues of our museums belong, generally, to the Roman era, or, at most, date from the successors of Alexander. The best, moreover, are mutilated. Your collection of casts,† composed of scattered torsos, heads and limbs, resembles that of a battle-field after a combat. Add to this, finally, the absence of any biography of the Greek masters. The

* The head of Juno in the Villa Ludovisi and that of Jupiter of Otricole.

† That of the Ecole des Beaux Arts studied by the students forming the author's audience.

most ingenious and most patient researches of the erudites* have been required to discover in the half of one of Pliny's chapters, in a few meagre descriptions by Pausanias and some isolated phrases of Cicero, Lucian and Quintillian, the chronology of artists, the affiliation of schools, the nature of talents and the gradual development and changes in art. We have but one way to supply these deficiencies; in default of a detailed history there is general history; in order to comprehend this work we are more than ever obliged to consider the people who executed it, the social habits which stimulated it, and the *milieu* out of which it sprung.

* *Geschichte der griechischen Plastik*, von J. Overbeck, and *Kunstler —Geschichte*, von Brunn.

RACE.

Let us first try to obtain a clear idea of the race, and to do this we will study the country. A people always receives an impression from the country it occupies, but the impression is the stronger proportionately to the more uncivilized and infantile condition of the people at the time of its establishment. When the French set out to colonize the Island of Bourbon or Martinique, and the English to settle North America and Australia, they carried along with them arms, implements, arts, manufactures, institutions and ideas, in short, an old and complete civilization which served to maintain their acquired type and to resist the influence of their new surroundings. But when the fresh and defenceless man abandons himself to nature, she developes, shapes and moulds him, the moral clay, as yet quite soft and pliant, yielding to and being fashioned by the physical pressure against which the past provides him with no support. Philologists show us a primitive epoch where Indians, Persians

Germans, Celts, Latins and Greeks had a language in common and the same degree of culture; another epoch, less ancient, when the Latins and the Greeks, already separated from their brethren, were still united,* acquainted with wine, living on tillage and grazing, possessing row-boats and having added to their old Vedic gods the new one of Hestia or Vesta, the domestic fireside. These are but little more than the rudiments of progress; if they are no longer savages they are still barbarians. From this time forth the two branches that have issued from the same stock, begin to diverge; on encountering them later we find that their structure and fruit instead of being alike are different, one, meanwhile, having grown up in Italy and the other in Greece, and we are led to regard the environment of the Greek plant in order to ascertain whether the soil and atmosphere which have nourished do not explain the peculiarities of its form and the direction of its development.

* Mommsen, Rœmische Geschichte, Vol. I., p. 21.

I.

Let us examine a map. Greece is a peninsula in the shape of a triangle, with its base resting on Turkey in Europe, extending towards the south, burying itself in the sea and narrowing at the Isthmus of Corinth to form another peninsula beyond, the Peloponnesus, still more southern, and a sort of mulberry leaf attached by a slender stalk to the main land. Add to this a hundred islands with the Asiatic coast opposite; a fringe of small countries stitched fast to the great barbaric continent and a sprinkling of scattered islands on the blue sea which the fringe surrounds—such is the land that has formed and maintained this highly intelligent and precocious people. It was singularly adapted to the work. To the north* of the Ægean Sea the climate is still severe, like that of the centre of Germany; southern fruits are not known in Roumelia, and its coast produces no myrtles. Descending towards the south, and on entering Greece, the con-

* Curtius, Grieschesche Geschichte, Vol. I., p. 4.

trast becomes striking. Forests always green begin in Thessaly, at the 40th degree; at the 39th, in Phthiotis, in the mild atmosphere of the sea and the coast, rice, cotton and the olive grow. In Eubœa and Attica the palm-tree appears, and almonds in the Cyclades; on the eastern coast of Argolis we find thick groves of the orange and the lemon; the African date lives in one corner of Crete. At Athens, which is the centre of Greek civilization, the finest fruits of the South grow without cultivation. Frost is scarcely seen more than once in twenty years; the extreme heats of the summer are modified by the sea-breeze, and, save a few gales in Thrace and the blasts of the sirocco, the temperature is delightful. Nowadays "the people are accustomed to sleeping in the streets from the middle of May to the end of September, while the women sleep on the roofs."* In such a country everybody lives out of doors. The ancients themselves regarded their climate as a gift of the gods. "Mild and clement," said Euripides, "is our atmosphere; the cold of winter is for us without rigor and the ar-

* About: *La Grèce contemporaine*, p. 345.

rows of Phœbus do not wound us." And elsewhere he adds: "The Athenians happy of old, and the descendants of the blessed gods, feeding on the most exalted wisdom of a country sacred and unconquered, always tripping elegantly through the purest atmosphere, where they say that of old the golden-haired Harmonia gave birth to the chaste nine Pierian muses. And they report also that Venus, drawing in her breath from the stream of the fair-flowing Cephisus, breathed over this country gentle, sweetly breathing gales of air; and always entwining in her hair the fragrant wreath of roses, sends the loves as accessory to wisdom; the assistants to every virtue."* These are the fine expressions of a poet, but through the ode we see the truth. A people formed by such a climate develops faster and more harmoniously than any other; man is neither prostrated nor enervated by excessive heat, nor chilled or indurated by severe cold. He is neither condemned to dreamy inactivity, nor to perpetual labor; he does not lag behind in mystic con-

* *Medea* (Buckley's translation). See also the celebrated chorus in the *Œdipus at Colonus* of Sophocles.

templation nor in brutal barbarism. Compare a Neapolitan or a Provençal with a man of Brittany a Hollander or a Hindoo, and you will recognize how the mildness and moderation of physical nature endow the soul with vivacity and so balance it as to lead the mind thus disposed and alert to thought and to action.

Two characteristics of the soil operate alike in this sense. In the first place, Greece is a net-work of mountains. Pindus, its central summit, extending towards the south with Othrys, Æta, Parnassus, Helicon, Cithæron and their bastions, form a chain the multiplied links of which cross the isthmus, rise up again and intermingle in the Peloponnesus; beyond are the islands consisting of emergent spines and the tops of mountains. This territory, thus embossed, has scarcely any plains; rock abounds everywhere as in our Provence; three-fifths of the surface of it is unfit for cultivation. "Look at the Views" and "Landscapes" by M. de Stackelberg,—everywhere barren stones, small rivers or mountain torrents leaving between their half-dried beds and the sterile rock a narrow strip of productive ground.

Herodotus already contrasts Sicily and Southern Italy, those fat nurses, with meagre Greece, "which at its birth had poverty for its foster-sister." In Attica, especially, the soil is lighter and thinner than anywhere else; the olive, the vine, barley and a little wheat are all that it provided man with. In these beautiful islands of marble, sparkling on the azure of the Ægean Sea, is found now and then a sacred grove, the cypress, the laurel and the palm, some bouquet of rich verdure, scattered vines on rocky slopes, fine fruits in the gardens and a few scanty crops in the hollows or on a declivity; but all this was more calculated for the eye and for a delicate sensibility than for the stomach and merely physical wants. Such a country forms lithe, active, sober mountaineers fed on the purity of its atmosphere. At the present day "the food of an English laborer would suffice in Greece for a family of six persons. The rich are quite content with a dish of vegetables for one of their repasts; the poor with a handful of olives or a bit of salt fish. The people at large eat meat at Easter for the whole year."* It is interest-

* About: *La Grèce contemporaine*, p. 41.

ing in this respect to see them at Athens in summer. "Epicures in a group of seven or eight persons are dividing up a sheep's head which cost six cents. These temperate men buy a slice of water-melon or a big cucumber which they eat like an apple." There are no drunkards among them; they are great drinkers but always of pure water. "If they enter a cabaret, it is to gossip." In a café "they call for a penny cup of coffee, a glass of water, a light for their cigarettes, a newspaper, and a set of dominoes." Such a regimen is not calculated to make the mind torpid; in lessening the wants of the stomach it increases those of the understanding. The ancients themselves noticed similar contrasts between Bœotia and Attica, and the Bœotian and the Athenian. One fed amidst fertile plains and in a dense atmosphere, accustomed to gross food and the eels of Lake Copaïs, was a great eater and drinker and of a sluggish intellect; the other, born on the poorest soil in Greece, contented with the head of a fish, an onion and a few olives, growing up in a light transparent and luminous atmosphere, displayed from his birth a singular keenness and vivacity of intellect, cease

lessly inventive and enterprising, sensitive and appreciative regardless of all other things, and "possessing, apparently, nothing peculiar to himself but thought."*

In the second place, if Greece is a land of mountains it is likewise a land of sea-coasts. Although smaller than Portugal it has more of these than all Spain. The sea penetrates the country through an infinity of gulfs, indentations, fissures and cavities; in the various views brought back by travellers you will observe, every other one, even in the interior, some blue band, triangle, or luminous semi-circle on the horizon. Generally it is framed in by projecting rocks or by islands which approach each other and form a natural harbor. A situation like this fosters a maritime life, especially where a poor soil and a rocky shore do not suffice to support the inhabitants. In primitive times there is but one species of navigation, and that is coasting, and no sea is better adapted to invite a border trade. Every morning a north wind springs up to waft vessels from Athens to the Cyclades; every evening a con-

* Thucydides, Book I., Chap. LXX.

trary breeze rises to carry them back. Between Greece and Asia Minor, islands occur like the stones of a ford; in clear weather a ship on this track is always in sight of land. From Corcyra Italy is visible, from Cape Malea the peaks of Crete, from Crete the mountains of Rhodes, from Rhodes, Asia Minor; two days' sail suffice to carry one from Crete to Cyrene, and only three are required to go from Crete to Egypt. Still to-day "there is the stuff of a sailor in every Greek you meet."* In this

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* About: *La Grèce contemporaine*, p. 146. Two islanders chance to meet in the port of Syra, and the following dialogue ensues:

"Good-day, brother, how are you?"

"Very well, thank you; what is the news?"

"Demitri, the son of Nicholas, has got back from Marseilles."

"Did he make any money?"

"Twenty-three thousand drachmæ, they say. That's a good deal."

"I made up my mind long ago that I ought to go to Marseilles. But I have no boat."

"We two will make one if you say so. Have you any timber?"

"A little."

"Everybody has enough for a boat. I have some canvas and my cousin John has enough rigging; we will put all this together."

"Who will be captain?"

"John, for he has already sailed there."

"We must have a boy to help us."

"There is my little godson, Basil."

"A child only eight years old! He's too small."

"Anybody is big enough to go to sea."

country, with a population of only 900,000, there were, in 1840, 30,000 sailors and 4,000 vessels; they do nearly the whole of the coasting business of the Mediterranean. We find the same ways and habits in the time of Homer; they are constantly launching a ship on the sea; Ulysses builds one with his own hands; they cruise all over, trading and pillaging the surrounding coasts. The Greeks were merchants, travellers, pirates, courtiers, and adventurers at the start and throughout their history; employing skill or force they set out to drain the great Oriental kingdoms or the barbaric populations of the west, bringing back gold, silver, ivory, slaves, ship-timber, all kinds of precious merchandise bought above and below the market, other people's ideas and inventions, those of Egypt, of Phœnicia,

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"But what cargo shall we take?"

"Our neighbor Petros has some bark (for tanning); daddy has got a few casks of wine, and I know a man in Tinos who has some cotton. We will stop at Smyrna, if you say so, for a freight of silk."

The vessel is built well or ill as it happens; the crew is obtained in one or two families, and, from friends and neighbors, whatever merchandise they may choose to offer. They set out for Marseilles by the way of Smyrna or even Alexandria, sell the cargo and take another; on returning to Syra, the freight is found to pay for the vessel and the partners divide the profits out of a few drachmæ left over.

of Chaldea, of Persia,* and of Etruria. A regime of this kind quickens and sharpens the intellect to a remarkable degree. Proof of it lies in the fact that the most precocious, the most civilized and most ingenious people of ancient Greece were mariners; the Ionians of Asia Minor, the Colonists of Magna Græcia, the Corinthians, Æginetans, Sicyonians and Athenians. The Arcadians, confined to their mountains, remained rural and simple; and likewise the Acarnanians, the Epirots and the Locrians who, with their outlet on a less favorable sea, and not being sea-faring, remain semi-barbarous to the last; their neighbors, the Etolians, at the time of the Roman conquest possessed bourgs only, without walls, and were simply rude pillagers. The spur which stimulated the others did not reach them. Such are the physical circumstances which, from the first, served to arouse the Greek intellect. This people may be compared to a swarm of bees born under a mild sky but on a meagre soil, turning to account the routes open to it through the air, foraging everywhere,

* Alcæus extols his brother for having fought in Babylon and for bringing therefrom an ivory-handled sword.

gathering supplies, swarming, relying on its own stings and dexterity for protection, building delicate edifices, compounding delicious honey, excited and humming amidst the huge creatures surrounding it, clashing haphazard and knowing but one master under whom to support itself.

Even in our days, fallen as they are, "they have as much mind as any people in the world; there is no intellectual effort of which they are not capable. They comprehend well and quickly; they acquire with wonderful facility every thing they wish to learn. Young merchants soon qualify themselves to speak five or six languages."* Mechanics are able in a few months to work at a somewhat difficult trade. A whole village, with its chief at the head of it, will interrogate and attentively listen to travellers. "A most remarkable thing is the indefatigable application of school-children," little and big; hired persons find time while fulfilling their engagements to pass examinations as lawyers or physicians. "You meet at Athens every kind of student except the student who don't study." In

* About: *La Grèce contemporaine.*

this respect no race has been so well endowed by nature, all circumstances apparently having concurred to unfetter the mind and sharpen the faculties.

II.

Let us follow out this feature in their history. Whether we consider it practically or speculatively, it is always keenness of mind, adroitness and ingenuity, which manifest themselves. It is a strange thing, at the dawn of civilization, when man elsewhere is excitable, rude and childish, to see one of their two heroes, the wise Ulysses, cautious, prudent and crafty, fertile in expedients, inexhaustible in falsehood, the able navigator, always attentive to his own interests. Returning home in disguise, he counsels his wife to get from her suitors presents of necklaces and bracelets, and he does not slay them until they have enriched his mansion. When Circe surrenders herself to him, or when Calypso proposes his departure, he takes the precaution of binding them by an oath. Ask him his name and he has always ready some fresh and appropriate story and genealogy. Pallas herself, to whom, without knowing her, he relates his stories, praises and admires him:

> Full shrewd were he and practised in deceit,
> Who should surpass thee in the ways of craft,

Even though he were a god,—thou unabashed
And prompt with shifts, and measureless in wiles.*

And the sons are worthy of their sire. At the end, as at the beginning of civilization, the intellect predominates; it was always the stamp of the character, and now it survives them. Greece once subjugated, we see the Greek a paid dilettant, sophist, rhetorician, scribe, critic and philosopher; then the Græculus of the Roman dominion, the parasite, buffoon and pander, ever alert, sprightly and useful; the complacent Protean who, good in every line, adapts himself to all characters, and gets out of all scrapes; infinite in dexterity, the first ancestor of the Scapins Mascarilles and other clever rogues, who, with no other heritage but their art, live upon it at other people's expense.

Let us return to their most brilliant era and consider their master work, science, that which best commends them to the admiration of humanity and which, if founded by them, is owing to the same instinct and the same necessities. The Phenician, who is a merchant, employs arithmetical rules in adjust-

* The Odyssey, translated by W. C. Bryant.

ing his accounts. The Egyptian, surveyor and stone-cutter, has geometrical processes by which to pile up his blocks, and estimate the area of his field annually inundated by the Nile. The Greek receives from them these technical systems, but they do not suffice him; he is not content with applying them commercially and industrially; he is investigative and speculative; he wants to know the why, the cause of things;* he seeks abstract proof and follows the delicate thread of ideas which leads from one theorem to another. Thales, more than six hundred years before Christ, devotes himself to the demonstration of the equality of the angles of the isosceles triangle. The ancients relate that Pythagoras, transported with joy on solving the problem of the square of the hypotenuse, promised the gods a hecatomb. They are interested in abstract truth. Plato, on see-

* Plato's "Theætetus." Take the whole of the part of Theætetus and the comparison he makes between figures and numbers.—See likewise the opening of the "Rivals." Herodotus (Book II., 29) is very instructive in this connection. Among the Egyptians no one could reply to him when he demanded the cause of the periodical rise of the Nile. Neither the priests nor the laymen had made this matter, which affected them so closely, a subject of inquiry or of hypothesis.—The Greeks, on the contrary, had already suggested three explanations of the phenomenon. Herodotus discusses these and suggests a fourth.

ing the Sicilian mathematicians apply their discoveries to machinery, reproaches them with degrading science; in his view of it they ought to confine themselves to the study of ideal lines. In fact they always promoted it without concerning themselves about its utility. For example, their researches on the properties of conic sections found no application until seventeen centuries later, when Kepler discovered the laws which control the movements of the planets. In this work, which constitutes the basis of all our exact sciences, their analysis is so rigid that in England Euclid's geometry still serves as the student's text-book. To decompose ideas and note their dependencies; to form a chain of them in such a way as to leave no link missing, the whole chain being fastened on to some incontestable axiom or group of familiar experiences; to delight in forging, attaching, multiplying and testing all these chains with no motive but that of a desire to find them always more numerous and more certain, is the especial endowment of the Greek mind. The Greeks think for the purpose of thinking, and hence their organization of the sciences. We do not establish one to-day

which does not rest on the foundations they laid; we are frequently indebted to them for its first story and sometimes an entire wing;* a series of inventors succeed each other in mathematics from Pythagoras to Archimedes; in astronomy from Thales and Pythagoras to Hipparchus and Ptolemy; in the natural sciences from Hippocrates to Aristotle and the Alexandrian anatomists; in history from Herodotus to Thucydides and Polybius; in logic, politics, morality and æsthetics from Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle to the Stoics and neo-platonicians.—Men so thoroughly absorbed by ideas could not fail to admire the most beautiful of all, the university of ideas. For eleven centuries, from Thales to Justinian, their philosophy never ceased to grow; always some new system arose blooming above or alongside of the old systems; even when speculation is imprisoned by Christian orthodoxy it makes its way and presses through the crevices; "the Greek language," says one of the Fathers of the Church, "is the mother of heresies." We of to-day still find in this vast store-

* Euclid, Aristotle's theory of the Syllogism and the Morality of the Stoics.

house our most fecund hypotheses;* thinking so much and with such a sound mind their conjectures are frequently found in accordance with the truth.

In this respect their performance has only been surpassed by their zeal. Two occupations, in their eyes, distinguished man from the brute and the Greek from the barbarian—a devotion to public affairs and the study of philosophy. We have only to read Plato's Theages and Protagoras to see the steady enthusiasm with which the youngest pursued ideas through the briars and brambles of dialectics. Their taste for dialectics itself is still more striking they never weary in its circuitous course; they are as fond of the chase as the game; they enjoy the journey as much as the journey's end. The Greek is much more a reasoner than a metaphysician or savant; he delights in delicate distinctions and subtle analysis; he revels in the weaving and super-refinement of spiders' webs.† His dexterity in this re-

* Plato's ideal types, Aristotle's Final causes, the Atomic theory of Epicurus and the classifications of the Stoics.

† See, in Aristotle, "Theory of Model Syllogisms," and in Plato, the "Parmenides" and "Sophistes." There is nothing more ingenious and more fragile than the whole of Aristotle's Physics and Physiology.

spect is unequalled; it is of little consequence to him whether this over-complicated and attenuated web is of any use in theory or in practice; it satisfies him to see the threads spun out and crossing each other in imperceptible and symmetrical meshes. Herein does the national weakness manifest the national talent. Greece is the mother of disputants, rhetoricians and sophists. Nowhere else has a group of eminent and popular men been seen teaching with the same success and fame as Gorgias, Protagoras and Polus, the art of making the worse appear the better cause, and of plausibly maintaining a foolish proposition however absurd.* It is Greek rhetoricians who are the eulogists of pestilence, fever, bugs, Polyphemus and Thersites; a Greek philosopher asserted that a wise man could be happy in the brazen bull of Phalaris. Schools existed, like that of Carneades, in which pleadings could be made on both sides; others, like that of Ænesidemus, to establish that no proposition is truer than that of the contrary proposition. In the

as may be seen in his "Problems." The waste of mental power and sagacity by these schools is enormous.

* The "Euthydemus" of Plato.

legacy bequeathed to us by antiquity a collection is found, the richest we have, of captious arguments and paradoxes; their subtleties would have been confined to a narrow field could they not have pushed their way as well on the side of error as on that of truth.

Such is the intellectual finesse which, transferred from reasoning to literature, fashioned the "Attic" taste, that is to say, an appreciation of niceties, a sportive grace, delicate irony, simplicity of style, ease of discourse and beauty of demonstration. It is said that Apelles went to see Protogenes, and, not caring to leave his name, took a pencil and drew a fine curved line on a panel ready at hand. Protogenes, on returning, looked at the mark and exclaimed, "No one but Apelles could have traced that!" then, seizing the pencil, he drew around it a second line still more refined and extended, and ordered it to be shown to the stranger. Apelles came back, and, mortified to see himself surpassed, intersected the first two contours by a third, the delicacy of which exceeded both. When Protogenes saw it, he exclaimed: "I am vanquished, let

me embrace my master!" This legend furnishes us with the least imperfect idea of the Greek mind. We have the subtle line within which it circumscribes the contours of things, and the native dexterity, precision and agility with which it circulates amidst ideas to distinguish and bind them together.

III.

This, however, is but one feature; there is another. Let us revert back to the soil and we shall see the second added to the first. This time, again, it is the physical structure of the country which has stamped the intellect of the race with that which we find in its labors and in its history. There is in this country nothing of the vast or gigantic; outward objects possess no disproportionate, overwhelming dimensions. We see nothing there like the huge Himalaya, nothing like those boundless entanglements of rank vegetation, those enormous rivers described in Indian poems; there is nothing like the interminable forests, limitless plains and the wild and shoreless ocean of Northern Europe. The eye there seizes the forms of objects without difficulty and retains a precise image of them; every object is medial, proportioned, easily and clearly perceptible to the senses. The mountains of Corinth, Attica, Bœotia and the Peloponnesus are

from three to four thousand feet high; only a few reach six thousand; you must go to the extreme north of Greece to find a summit like those of the Alps and the Pyrenees, and then it is Olympus, of which they make the home of the gods. The Peneus and the Achelous, the largest rivers, are, at most, but thirty or forty leagues long; the others, usually, are mere brooks and torrents. The sea itself, so terrible and threatening at the north, is here a sort of lake; we have no feeling of the solitude of immensity; some waste or island is always in sight; it does not leave on the mind a sinister impression; it does not appear like a ferocious and destructive being; it has no leaden, pallid and cadaverous hue; the coasts are not ravaged by it and it has no tides strewing them with mire and stony fragments. It is lustrous, and according to an expression of Homer, "dazzling, wine-colored, violet-colored;" the ruddy rocks of its shores enclose its bright surface within a fretted border which seems like the frame to a picture. Imagine fresh and primitive natures having such phenomena for their cultivation and constant education. Through

these they obtain the habit of clear and defined imagery and avoid the vague tumult, the impetuous revery, the anxious apprehension of the "beyond." Thus is a mental mould formed out of which, later, all ideas are to issue in relief. Countless circumstances of soil and climate combine to perfect it. In this country the mineral character of the ground is visible and appears much stronger than in our own Provence; it is not weakened or effaced, as in our northern moist countries, by the universally diffused strata of arable soil and verdant vegetation. The skeleton of the earth, the geologic bonework, the purplish-gray marble peers out in jutting rocks, prolongs itself in naked crags, cuts its sharp profile against the sky, encloses valleys with peaks and crests so that the landscape, furrowed with bold fractures and gashed everywhere with sudden breaches and angles, looks as if sketched by a vigorous hand whose caprices and fancy in no respect impair the certainty and precision of its touch. The quality of the atmosphere increases likewise this saliency of objects. That of Attica, especially, is of extraordinary transparency. On turning Cape

Sunium the helmet of Pallas on the Acropolis could be seen at a distance of several leagues. Mount Hymettus, two leagues off from Athens, seems to a European just landed a walk before breakfast. The vapory mist with which our atmosphere is always filled does not arise to soften distant contours; they are not uncertain, half-commingled and blotted out, but are detached from their background like the figures on antique vases. Add, finally, the exquisite brilliancy of the sun which pushes to extremes the contrast between light parts and shadows and which gives an opposition of masses to precision of lines. Thus does Nature, through the forms with which she peoples the mind, directly incline the Greek to fixed and precise conceptions. She again inclines him to them indirectly through the order of political association to which she leads and restrains him.

Greece, indeed, is a small country compared with its fame, and it will seem to you still smaller if you observe how divided it is. The principal chains on one side of the sea and the lateral chains on the other separate a number of distinct provinces form-

ing so many circumscribed districts—Thessaly, Bœotia, Argos, Messenia, Laconia and all the islands. It is difficult to traverse the sea in barbarous ages, while mountain defiles are always available for defense. The populations of Greece accordingly could easily protect themselves against invasion and exist along side of each other in small independent communities. Homer enumerates thirty,* and, on the establishment and multiplication of colonies, these get to be several hundred. To modern eyes a Greek State seems in miniature. Argos is from eight to ten miles long and four or five wide; Laconia is of about the same size; Achaia is a narrow strip of land on the flank of a mountain which descends to the sea. The whole of Attica does not equal the half of one of our departments; the territories of Corinth, Sicyon and Megara dwindle to a town suburb; generally speaking, and especially in the islands and colonies, the State is simply a town with a beach or a surrounding border of farms. Standing on one acropolis the eye can take in the acropolis or mountains of its neighbor. In so limited a circuit the mind embraces

* Book II. The Enumeration of warriors and vessels.

all distinctly; the moral patrimony possesses no element of the gigantic, abstract or vague as with us the senses can take it all in; it is compounded with the physical patrimony; both are fixed in the citizen's mind by definite formations. In a mental conception of Athens, Corinth, Argos or Sparta he imagines the configuration of his valley or the silhouette of his city. The citizens belonging to it rise in his mind the same as its natural features; the contracted sphere of his political domain, like the form of his natural domain, provides for him beforehand the average and fixed type in which all his conceptions are to be included. In this respect consider their religion; they have no sentiment of this infinite universe in which a generation of people, every conditioned being, however great, is but an atom in time and place. Eternity does not set up before them its pyramid of myriads of ages like a vast mountain by the side of which a little life is simply a mole-hill or grain of sand; they do not concern themselves as others do,—the Indians, the Egyptians, the Semites and the Germans—with the ever-renewed circle of metempsychoses, with the still and lasting slumber

of the grave; with the formless and bottomless abyss from which issue beings like passing vapor; with the one God, absorbing and terrible, in whom all forces of nature are concentrated, and for whom heaven and earth are simply a tabernacle and a footstool; with that august, mysterious, invisible power which the heart's worship discovers through and beyond all things.* Their ideas are too clear and constructed on too narrow a model. The universal escapes them, or, at least, half occupies them; they do not form a God of it and much less a person; it remains in their religion in the back-ground, being the *Moira*, the *Aisa*, the *Eimarmene*, in other terms, the part assigned to each. It is fixed; no being, whether man or god, can escape the circumstances of his lot; fundamentally, this is an abstract truth; if the Moiræ of Homer are goddesses, it is but little more than fiction; under the poetic expression, as under a transparent sheet of water, we see appearing the indissoluble chain of facts and the indestructible demarcation of things. Our sciences of to-day admit these con-

* Tacitus: "De Moribus Germanorum."—Deorum nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.

ceptions; the Greek idea of destiny is nothing more than our modern idea of law. Every thing is determined, which is what our formulæ assert and which has been forecast in their divinations.

When they develope this idea it is to still more strengthen the limits imposed on beings. Out of the mute force which unfolds and assigns destinies they fashion their Nemesis,* who humbles the exalted and represses all excesses. One of the grand sentences of the oracle is "Not too much." Guard against inordinate desire, dread complete prosperity, fortify yourself against intoxication, always preserve moderation, is the counsel which every poet and every thinker of the great epoch enunciates. Instinct and the spontaneous reason have nowhere been so lucid; when, at the first awakening of reflection, they try to conceive the world they form it in the image of their own mind. It is a system of order, a Kosmos, a harmony, an admirable and regular arrangement of things self-subsistent and self-transforming. At a later period the Stoics compare it to a vast city governed by the best laws.

* See Tournier's "Nemesis ou la Jalousie des Dieux."

There is no place here for mystic and incomprehensible gods, nor for destructive and despotic gods. The religious vertigo did not enter into the sound and well-balanced minds which conceived a world like this. Their divinities soon become human beings; they have parents, children, a genealogy, a history, drapery, palaces and a physical frame like ours; they are wounded and suffer; the greatest, Zeus himself, beheld their advent and some day perhaps will see the end of their reign.*

On the shield of Achilles, which represents an army, "men marched led by Ares and Athena, both in gold, in golden vestments, tall and beautiful, as is proper for gods, for men were much smaller." There is indeed but little difference besides this between them and ourselves. Often, in the Odyssey, when Ulysses or Telemachus encounter unawares any tall or fine-looking personage, they ask if he is a god. Human divinities of this stamp do not disturb the minds which conceive them; Homer manages them his own way; he is constantly bringing in Athena for slight offices, such as indicating

* The Prometheus of Æschylus.

to Ulysses the dwelling of Alcinous and marking spot where his discus fell. The theological poet moves about in his divine world with the freedom and serenity of a playful child. We see him there laughing and enjoying himself; on exhibiting to us Ares surprised in the arms of Aphrodite Apollo indulges his merriment and asks Hermes if he would not like to be in Ares' place:

> . . . . . I would that it were so,
> Oh archer-king Apollo; I could bear
> Chains thrice as many and of infinite strength,
> And all the gods and all the goddesses
> Might come to look upon me; I would keep
> My place with golden Venus at my side.*

Read the hymn in which Aphrodite offers herself to Anchises, and especially the hymn to Hermes, who, the very day of his birth, shows himself a contriving, robbing, mendacious Greek, but with so much grace that the poet's narrative seems to be the badinage of a sculptor. In the hands of Aristophanes, in the "Frogs" and the "Clouds," Hercules and Bacchus are treated with still greater freedom. All this smooths the way for the decorative gods of Pompeii,

* The Odyssey, translated by W. C. Bryant.

the pretty and sinister pleasantries of Lucian, and the entire Olympic circle of the agreeable the social and the dramatic. Gods so closely resembling man soon become his companions, and later his sport. The clear mind which, to bring them within its reach, deprives them of mystery and infinity, regards them as its own creations and delights in the myths of its own formation.

Let us now glance at their ordinary life. Here, again, they are wanting in veneration. The Greek cannot subordinate himself, like the Roman, to one grand unity, a vast conceivable but invisible patrimony. He has not progressed beyond that form of association in which the State consists of the City. His colonies are their own masters; they receive a pontiff from the metropolis and regard him with sentiments of filial affection; but there their dependence rests. They are emancipated children, similar to the young Athenian who, on reaching manhood, is dependent on nobody and is his own master; whilst the Roman colonies are only military posts, similar to the young Roman who, though married, a magistrate and even consul, always feels on his shoulder

the weight of a father's hand, a despotic authority from which nothing, save a triple sale can set him free. To forego self-control; to submit to distant rulers, never seen by them; to consider themselves part of a vast whole; to lose sight of themselves for a great national benefit, is what the Greeks never could do with any persistency. They shut themselves up and indulged in mutual jealousies; even when Darius and Xerxes invaded their country they could scarcely unite; Syracuse refuses assistance because she is not given the command; Thebes sides with the Medes. When Alexander combines the Greek forces to conquer Asia, the Lacedemonians do not respond to the summons. No city succeeds in forming a confederation of the others under its lead; Sparta, Athens, Thebes, all in turn fail; rather than yield to their compatriots the vanquished apply for money to Persia and make concessions to the Great King. Factions in each city exile each other, and the banished, as in the Italian Republics, attempt to return through violence with the aid of the foreigner. Thus divided, Greece is conquered by a semi-barbarous but disciplined people, the independence of sep-

arate cities ending in the servitude of the nation. This downfall is not accidental, but fatal. The State, as the Greeks conceived it, was too small; it was incapable of resisting the shock of heavy external masses; it is an ingenious and perfect work of art, but fragile. Their greatest thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, limit the city to a community of five or ten thousand free men. Athens had twenty thousand, beyond which, according to them, it was simply a mob. They cannot conceive of the good organization of a larger community. An acropolis covered with temples, hallowed by the bones of the heroes who founded it and by the images of national gods, an agora, a theatre, a gymnasium, a few thousands of temperate, brave, free and handsome men, devoted to "philosophy or public business," served by slave cultivators of the soil and slave artisans, is the city which they conceive, an admirable work of art, daily established and perfected under their own eyes, in Thrace, on the shores of the Euxine, of Italy and of Sicily, outside of which every form of society seems to them confusion and barbarism, but whose perfection, nevertheless, denotes lit-

tleness, and which, amidst the rude shocks of human encounter, lasts only for a day.

These drawbacks are accompanied by corresponding advantages. If their religious conceptions are wanting in gravity and in grandeur; if their political organization lacks stability and endurance, they are exempt from the moral deformities which the greatness of a religion or of a State imposes on humanity. Civilization, everywhere else, has disturbed the natural equilibrium of the faculties; it has diminished some to exaggerate the others; it has sacrificed the present to the future life, man to the Divinity, the individual to the State; it has produced the Indian fakir, the Egyptian and Chinese functionary, the Roman legist and official, the mediæval monk, the subject, *administré* and *bourgeois* of modern times. Man, under this pressure, has in turn simultaneously exalted and debased himself; he becomes a wheel in a vast machine, or considers himself naught before the infinite. In Greece he subjected his institutions to himself instead of subjecting himself to them; he made of them a means and not an end. He used them for a com-

plete and harmonious self-development; he could be at once poet, philosopher, critic, magistrate, pontiff, judge, citizen, and athlete; exercise his limbs, his taste and his intellect; combine in himself twenty sorts of talent without one impairing the other; he could be a soldier without being an automaton, a dancer and singer without becoming a dramatic buffoon, a thoughtful and cultivated man without finding himself a book-worm; he could decide on public matters without delegating his authority to others, honor his gods without the restrictions of dogmatic formulas, without bowing to the tyranny of a superhuman might, without losing himself in the contemplation of a vague and universal being. It seems that, having designated the visible and accurate contour of man and of life, they omitted the rest and thus expressed themselves: "Behold the true man, an active and sensitive body, possessing mind and will, the true life of sixty or seventy years between the whining infant and the silent tomb! Let us strive to render this body as agile, strong, healthy, and beautiful as possible; to display this mind and will in every circle of virile activity; to deck this life

with every beauty which delicate senses, quick comprehension and a proud and animated consciousness can create and appreciate." Beyond this they see nothing; or, if there is a "beyond," it is for them like that Cimmerian land of which Homer speaks, the dim and sunless region of the dead, enshrouded with mournful vapors where, like winged bats, flock helpless phantoms with bitter cries to fill and refresh their veins from its channels, drinking the red gore of victims. The constitution of their mind limited their desires and efforts to a circumscribed sphere, lit up in the full blaze of sunshine, and to this arena, as glowing and as restricted as their stadium, we must resort to see them exercise.

IV.

To do this we have to look at the country once more and draw together our impression of the whole. It is a beautiful land, inspiring one with a joyous sentiment and tending to make man regard life as a holiday. Scarcely more than its skeleton exists to-day. Like our Provence, and still more than it, it has been shorn and despoiled, scraped, so to say; the ground has sunk away and vegetation is rare; bare, rugged rock, here and there spotted with meagre bushes, absorbs the expanse and occupies three-fourths of the horizon. You may, nevertheless, form an idea of what it was by following the still intact coasts of the Mediterranean from Toulon to Hyères and from Naples to Sorrento and Amalfi, except that you must imagine a bluer sky, a more transparent atmosphere and more clearly defined and more harmonious mountain forms. It seems as if there was no winter in this country. Evergreen oaks, the olive, the orange, the lemon, and the cypress form, in the valleys and on the sides of

the gorges, an eternal summer landscape; they even extend down to the margin of the sea; in February, at certain places, oranges drop from their stems and fall into the water. There is no haze and but little rain; the atmosphere is balmy and the sun mild and beneficent. Man here is not obliged, as in our northern climates, to protect himself against inclemencies by complicated contrivances, and to employ gas, stoves, double, triple and quadruple garments, sidewalks, street-sweepers and the rest to render habitable the muddy and cold sewer through which, without his police and his energy, he would have to paddle. He has no need to invent spectacular halls and operatic scenery; he has only to look around him and find that nature furnishes more beautiful ones than any which his art could devise. At Hyères, in January, I saw the sun rise behind an island; the light increased and filled the atmosphere; suddenly, at the top of a rock, a flame burst forth; the vast crystal sky expanded its arch over the immense watery plain while the innumerable crests of the waves and the deep blue of the uniform surface were traversed with ripples

of gold; at evening the distant mountains assumed the delicate hues of the rose and the lilac. In summer this sunny illumination diffuses through the atmosphere and over the sea such splendor that the surcharged senses and imagination seem to be carried away in triumph and glory; every wave sparkles; the water takes the hues of precious stones, turquoises, amethysts, sapphires, lapis-lazuli, all in motion and undulating beneath the universal and immaculate celestial brightness. It is in this inundation of luminousness that we have to imagine the coasts of Greece like so many marble ewers and fountains scattered here and there through the field of azure.

We need not be surprised if we find in the Greek character that fund of gayety and vivacity, that need of vital and conscious energy which we meet even now among the Provençals, the Neapolitans, and, generally, in southern populations.* Man ever

* "These races are lively, quiet and gay. The infirm man there is not cast down; he calmly awaits the approach of death; every thing smiles around him. Here is the secret of that divine complacency of the Homeric poems and of Plato; the narrative of the death of Socrates in the "Phædon" scarcely shows a tinge of sadness. To live is

continues to move as nature first directs him, for the aptitudes and tendencies which she firmly implants in him are precisely the aptitudes and tendencies which she daily satisfies. A few lines from

to flower and then to give fruit—could it be more? If, as some may contend, the pre-occupation with death is the distinguishing trait of Christianity and of the modern religious sentiment, the Greek race is the least religious of all. It is a superficial race, regarding life as a thing void of the supernatural or a hereafter. Such simplicity of conception belongs, in great part, to the climate and to the purity of the atmosphere, to the wonderful joyousness which one experiences there, but much more to the instincts of the Hellenic race so adorably idealistic. Any trifle—a tree, a flower, a lizzard, or a tortoise—brings to mind thousands of metamorphoses, sung by the poets; a stream of water, a little crevice in a rock are designated as the abode of nymphs; a well with a cup on its margin, an inlet of the sea so narrow that the butterflies cross it and yet navigable for the largest vessels as at Paros; orange and cypress trees extending their shadows over the water, a small pine grove amid the rocks suffice, in Greece, to produce that contentment which awakens beauty. To stroll in the gardens at night listening to the cicada, and to sit in the moonlight playing the flute; to go and imbibe water from the mountain source, with a piece of bread, a fish and a flask of wine to be drank while singing; to suspend, at family festivals, a crown of leaves over the portal, and to go with chaplets of flowers; to carry to public festivities a thyrsus decked with verdure; to pass whole days in dancing and to play with tame goats, are Greek enjoyments—the enjoyments of a poor, economical, eternally youthful race, inhabiting a charming country, finding its well-being in itself and in the gifts which the gods have bestowed upon it. The pastoral model of Theocritus was a truth in Hellenic countries; Greece always delighted in this minor kind of refined and pleasing poetry, one of the most characteristic of its literature, a mirror of its own life almost everywhere else silly and affected. The pleasure of living and sprightliness of humor are pre-emi-

Aristophanes will portray to you this frank, spright ly and radiant sensuousness. Some Athenian peas ants are celebrating the return of peace.

"I am delighted! I am delighted at being rid of helmet, and cheese, and onions; for I find no pleasure in battles, but to continue drinking beside the fire with my dear companions, having kindled whatever is the driest of firewood which has been sawn up in summer, and roasting some chick-peas, and putting on the fire the esculent acorn, and at the same time kissing my Thracian maid while my wife is washing herself. For there is not any thing

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nently Grecian traits. The foliage of youth was always peculiar to that race; for it *indulgere genio* is not the stolid intoxication of the English nor the vulgar pastime of the French; it is rather simply to think that nature is gracious and that one may and ought to yield to her. To the Greek, in fine, nature is the suggestor of elegance, a mistress of rectitude and virtue. 'Concupiscence,' the idea that nature incites us to do evil, has no meaning for him. The taste for ornamentation which distinguishes the Greek palikary and shows itself so innocently in the Greek maiden, is not the pompous vanity of the city damsel inflated with the ridiculous conceit of a parvenue; it is the pure and simple sentiment of unaffected youth conscious of being the legitimate offspring of the true parents of beauty." ["Saint Paul," by E. Renan, p. 202.] A friend who has travelled some time in Greece tells me that the horse-drivers and guides will often pluck some attractive shrub and carry it carefully in their hand during the day, put it safely by in the evening on going to bed, and resume it in the morning for farther pleasure in it.

more agreeable than for the seed to be already sown, and the god to rain upon it, and some neighbor to say: 'Tell me, O Comarchides, what shall we do at this time of day?' I've a mind to drink, since the god acts so favorably. Come, wife, wash three chenixes of kidney-beans and mix some wheat with them, and bring out some figs, for it is in no wise possible to strip off the vine leaves to-day, or to grub round the roots, since the ground is so wet. And let some one bring forth from my house the thrush and the two finches. And there were also within some beestings and four pieces of hare. * * * Bring in three pieces, boy, and give one to my father, and beg some fruit-bearing myrtles from Æschineades, and at the same time let some one call on Charniades that he may drink with us, since the god benefits and aids our crops. * * * Most august goddess queen, venerable Peace, mistress of choral dances, mistress of nuptials, receive our sacrifice! * * * Grant that our market be filled with multifarious good things; with garlic, early cucumbers, apples and pomegranates; * * * and that we may see people bringing from the Bœotians geese,

ducks, wood-pigeons and sand-pipers, and that baskets of Copaïc eels come, and that we, collected in crowds around them, buying fish, may jostle with Morychus and Teleas and other gourmands. * * * Come quick, Dicæopolis, for the priest of Bacchus sends for you. Make haste, all things are in readiness—couches, tables, cushions for the head, chaplets, ointments, sweetmeats; the courtesans are there, cakes of fine flour, honey-cakes, lovely dancing girls, Harmodius' delights." I stop the quotation which becomes too free; antique sensuality and southern sensuality make use of bold gestures and very precise language.

Such a cast of mind leads man to regard life as a continuous holiday. The most serious ideas and institutions in the hands of the Greek become gay; his divinities are "the happy gods that never die." They dwell on the summits of Olympus, "which the winds do not shake; which are never wet by rain or visited by snow; where the cloudless ether is disclosed and where the bright light nimbly dances." Here in a glittering palace, seated on golden thrones, they drink nectar and eat ambrosia while the muses

"sing with their beautiful voices." Heaven to the Greek, is eternal festivity in broad daylight, and consequently the most beautiful life is that which most resembles the life of the gods. With Homer the happy man is he who can "revel in the bloom of his youth and reach the threshold of old age." Religious ceremonies are joyous banquets at which the gods are content because they obtain their share of wine and meat. The most imposing festivals are operatic representations. Tragedy, comedy, dancing choruses and gymnastic games form a part of their worship. In honoring the gods it never occurs to them that it is necessary to fast, mortify the flesh, pray in fear and trembling, and prostrate one's self deploring one's sins; but on the contrary, to take part in their enjoyments, to display before them the most beautiful nude forms, to deck the city in their behalf, and, abstracting man for a moment from his mortal condition, elevate him to theirs by every magnificence which art and poesy can furnish. This "enthusiasm" to them is piety; and, after giving vent in tragedy to their grand and solemn emotions, they again seek in comedy an outlet for their extravagant

buffooneries and their voluptuous license. One must have read Aristophanes' "Lysistrata" and "Thesmophoriazusæ" to imagine these transports of animal life, to comprehend a public celebration of the Dionysia and the dramatic dance of the cordax, to comprehend that, at Corinth, a thousand courtesans performed the service of the temple of Aphrodite, and that religion consecrated all the scandal and infatuation of a kermess and a carnival.

The Greeks partook of social life as thoughtlessly as the religious life. The conquest of the Roman is for acquisition; he utilizes vanquished nations as he would so many farms, methodically and continuously, with the spirit of an administrator and business man; the Athenian explores the sea, disembarks and fights without establishing any thing, at irregular times, according to the impulse of the hour, the necessity of action and to gratify a freak of the imagination; through a spirit of enterprise, a love of glory and for the satisfaction of being first among the Greeks. The people, with the funds of their allies, adorn their city and, commanding their artists to produce temples, theatres, statues, decorations

and processions, avail themselves daily, and in every sense, of the public wealth. Aristophanes amuses them with caricatures of their magistrates and politicians. The theatres are open free of expense; at the end of the Dionysia the money on hand in the treasury, contributed by their allies, is distributed. They soon demand pay for their services as dicasts and in the public assemblies. Every thing is for the people. They oblige the rich to defray the expense of choruses, actors, the representations and all the finest spectacles. However poor they may be, they have baths and gymnasia, supported by the treasury, as pleasant as those of the knights.* Towards the last they give themselves no further care; they hire mercenaries to carry on their wars; if they concern themselves with politics, it is simply for discussion; they listen to their orators as dilettanti and attend to their debates, recriminations and eloquent assaults as they would a performance in a cock-pit. They sit in judgment upon talent and applaud judiciously. The main thing with them is to ensure perfect festivals; they decree the penalty

* Xenophon: "The Athenian Republic."

of death against whosoever shall propose to divert any portion of the money set aside for them to war purposes. Their generals bear witness to this: "Except one alone whom you send to battle," says Demosthenes, "the others follow the sacrifices in the adornment of your festivals." In the equipment and despatch of a fleet they do not act, or else act too late; while, on the contrary, for processions and public performances, every thing is foreseen, arranged, and exactly fulfilled as it ought to be and at the appointed hour. Little by little, under the dominion of primitive sensuality, the State becomes reduced to a spectacular enterprise, whose business it is to provide poetic enjoyment for people of taste.

Likewise, finally, in philosophy and in science, they aimed only to cull the flower of things; they possessed none of the abnegation of the modern savant, who devotes his genius to the elucidation of an obscure point; who gives up years of observation to some species of animal; who incessantly multiplies and verifies his experiments; who, abandoning himself voluntarily to thankless labor, passes his life in patiently hewing two or three stones for an immense

edifice which he cannot see completed, but which is to be of vast service to generations to come. Philosophy, here, is talk; it is born in the gymnasia, under porticoes, and in groves of sycamore; the master converses as he walks, and his pupils follow him. All, at the outset, rush on to lofty conclusions; to generalize is their pleasure; they delight in it and care but little for constructing a good, solid foundation; their proofs dwindle down most frequently to the mere resemblance of truths. They are, in short, speculators, fond of flying over the summit of things, of traversing in three paces, like Homer's gods, a vast new realm, of embracing the entire universe in a single glance. A system is a sort of sublime opera, the opera of comprehensive and inquisitive minds. Their philosophy, from Thales to Proclus, has, like their tragedy, entwined itself around thirty or forty principal themes, and with a multitude of variations, amplification and admixtures. The philosophic imagination manipulated ideas and hypotheses, just as the mythologic imagination manipulated legend and divinity.

Passing from their works to their methods we see

the same intellectual efforts. They are as much sophists as they are philosophers; they exercise the mind for the mind's sake. A subtle distinction, a long and refined analysis, a captious argument of difficult elaboration, attracts and absorbs them. They amuse themselves with and linger over dialectics, quibbles and paradoxes;* they are not sufficiently in earnest; if they undertake any research it is not with a view to obtain a fixed and definite acquisition; they do not love truth wholly and absolutely, forgetful of and indifferent to the rest. She is game which they often run down, but, to see their reasoning, we soon recognize that, without acknowledging it to themselves, they prefer the chase, the chase with its manœuvrings, its artifices, its circuits, its inspiration and that sentiment of free discursive and victorious action with which it stimulates the nerves and imagination of the hunter. "O

* See logical methods in Plato and Aristotle, and especially the proofs of the immortality of the soul in the "Phædon." In all this philosophy the faculties are superior to the work in hand. Aristotle wrote a treatise on Homeric problems following the example of the rhetoricians who sought to ascertain whether, when Aphrodite was wounded by Diomed, the wound was in the right hand or in the left.

Greeks! Greeks!" said an Egyptian priest to Solon, "what children ye are!" They played, in fact, with life, and all life's gravest things, with religion and the gods, with government and law, with philosophy and truth.

V.

Hence their position as the greatest artists of the world. They possessed the charming freedom of mind, the superabundance of inventive gayety, the gracious intoxication of invention which leads the child to constantly form and arrange little poems with no object but that of giving full play to new and over lively faculties suddenly awakened. The three leading traits that we have distinguished in their character are just those which constitute the artistic soul and intellect. Delicacy of perception, an aptitude at seizing nice relationships, the sense of gradation, is what allows the artist to construct a totality of forms, colors, sounds and incidents, in short, elements and details, so closely united among themselves by inward dependencies, that their organization constitutes a living thing, surpassing in the imaginary world the profound harmony of the actual world. The necessity of clearness, a feeling for proportion, dislike of the vague and the abstract, contempt for the monstrous and exaggerated,

and a taste for accurate and defined contours, is what leads him to give his conceptions a shape which the imagination and senses can easily grasp, and, consequently, to execute works comprehensible to every race and all ages, and which, being human, are eternal. The love and worship of this life, the sentiment of human energy and the necessity of calmness and gayety, is what leads him to avoid depicting physical infirmity and moral ills, to represent the health of the spirit and perfection of the body, and to complete the acquired beauty of expression by the fundamental beauty of the subject. These are the distinct traits of their entire art. A glance at their literature compared with that of the Orient, of the middle ages and of modern times; a perusal of Homer compared with that of the Divine Comedy, of Faust or of the Indian epics; a study of their prose compared with the prose of every other age and country, will soon furnish convincing proof of it. Every literary style relatively to theirs is pompous, heavy, forced and obscure; every moral type relatively to theirs is overstrained, mournful and morbid; every oratorical and poetic model, every model

in fact which has not been borrowed from them, is disproportioned, distorted and badly put together by the work which it contains.

Our space is limited, and among a hundred examples we can choose but one. Let us take an object exposed to the eye, and that which first attracts attention on entering the city. I refer to the temple. It stands usually on a height called the Acropolis, on a substructure of rocks, as at Syracuse, or on a small eminence which, as at Athens, was the first place of refuge and the original site of the city. It is visible from every point on the plain and from the neighboring hills; vessels greet it at a distance on approaching the port. It stands out in clear and bold relief in the limpid atmosphere.* It is not, like our mediæval cathedrals, crowded and smothered by rows of houses, secreted, half-concealed, inaccessible to the eye save in its details and its upper section. Its base, sides, entire mass and full proportions appear at a glance. You are not obliged to divine the whole from a part; its situa-

* See the restorations, accompanied with memoirs, by Tetaz, Paccard Boitte and Garnier.

tion renders it proportionate to man's senses. In order that there may be no lack of distinctness of impression, they give it medium or small dimensions. There are only two or three of the Grecian temples as large as the Madeleine. They bear no resemblance to the vast monuments of India, Babylon and Egypt, the storied and crowded palaces, the mazes of avenues, enclosures, halls and colossi, so numerous that the mind at last becomes disturbed and bewildered. They do not resemble the gigantic cathedrals whose naves contain the entire population of a city; which the eye, even if they were placed on a height, could not wholly embrace; whose profiles are lost and the total harmony of which cannot be appreciated except on a perspective plan. The Greek temple is not a place of assembly but the special habitation of a god, a shrine for his effigy, a marble monstrance enclosing an unique statue. At a hundred paces off from the sacred precincts you can seize the direction and harmony of the principal lines. They are, moreover, so simple that a glance suffices to comprehend the whole. This edifice has nothing complicated, quaint or elaborate about it·

it is a rectangle bordered by a peristyle of columns; three or four of the elementary forms of geometry suffice for the whole, the symmetry of their arrangement setting them forth through their repetitions and contrasts. The crowning of the pediment, the fluting of the pillars, the abacus of the capital, all the accessories and all details contribute yet more to show in stronger relief the special character of each member, while the diversity of polychromy serves to mark and define their respective values.

You have recognized in these different characteristics the fundamental need of pure and fixed forms. A series of other characters shows the subtlety of their tact and the exquisite delicacy of their perceptions. There is a close tie between all the forms and dimensions of a temple as there is between all the organs of a living organism, and this tie they discovered; they established the architectural module which according to the diameter of a column, determines its height, next its shape, next its base and capital, and next the distance between the columns and the general economy of the edifice. They intentionally modified the clumsy strictness of math

ematical forms; they adapted them to the secret exigencies of the eye; they gave a swell to the column by a skilful curve two-thirds its height; they gave convexity to all the horizontal, and inclined to the centre all the vertical lines of the Parthenon; they discarded all the fetters of mechanical symmetry; they gave unequal wings to their Propylæa and different levels to the two sanctuaries of their Erectheum; they intersected, varied and inflected their plans and angles in such a manner as to endow architectural geometry with the grace, the diversity, the unforeseen, the fleeting suppleness of a living thing, without diminishing the effect of the masses; and they decked its surface with the most elegant series of painted and sculptured ornaments. Nothing in all this equals the originality of their taste unless it be its correctness; they combined two qualities apparently excluding each other, extreme richness and extreme gravity. Our modern perceptions do not reach this point; we only half succeed, and by degrees, in divining the perfection of their invention. The exhuming of Pompeii was necessary to enable us to conjecture the charming vivacity and

harmony of decoration with which they clothed their walls; and in our own day, an English architect has measured the imperceptible inflexion of the swollen horizontal lines and the convergent perpendicular lines which give to their most beautiful temple its supreme beauty. We, in their presence, are like an ordinary listener to a musician born and brought up to music; there are in his performance delicacies of execution, purity of tone, fulness of chords and achievements of expression which the listener, partially endowed and badly prepared for it, only seizes in gross and from time to time. We retain only the total impression, and this impression, conformable to the genius of the race, is that of a gay and invigorating fête. The architectural structure is of itself healthy and viable; it does not require, like the Gothic cathedral, a colony of masons at its feet to keep restoring its constant decay; it does not borrow support for its arches from outward buttresses; it needs no iron frame to sustain a prodigious scaffolding of fretted and elaborated pinnacles, to fasten to its walls its marvellously intricate lacework and its fragile stone filagree. It is not the

product of an exalted imagination but of a lucid reason. It is so made as to endure by itself and without help. Almost every temple in Greece would be still intact if the brutality or fanaticism of man had not supervened to destroy them. Those of Pæstum remain erect after twenty-three centuries; it is the explosion of a powder magazine which cut the Parthenon in two. Left to itself the Greek temple stands and continues to stand; we realize this in its great solidity; its mass is consolidated instead of being weighed down. We are sensible of the stable equilibrium of its diverse members; for the architect reveals the inner through the outer structure, the lines which flatter the eye with their harmonious proportions being just the lines which satisfy the understanding with assurances of eternity.* Add to this appearance of power an air of ease and elegance; mere endurance is not the aim of the Greek edifice as with the Egyptian edifice. It is not crushed down by a weight of matter like our obstinate and ungainly Atlas; it unfolds, ex

* In this connection the reader is referred to "*La Philosophie de l'architecture en Grèce*," by M. E. Boutmy, a work of a very accurate and delicate spirit.

pands, and rises up like the beautiful figure of an athlete in whom vigor accords with delicacy and repose. Consider again its adornment, the golden bucklers starring its architrave, its golden acroteria, the lions' heads gleaming in sunshine, the threads of gold and sometimes of enamel which entwine the capitals, the covering of vermilion minium, blue, light ochre and green, every bright or quiet tone, which, united and opposed as at Pompeii, affords the eye a sensation of healthy and hearty southern joyousness. Finally, take into account the bas-reliefs, the statues of the pediments, metopes and frise, especially the colossal effigy of the inner cell, the sculptures of ivory, marble and gold, those heroic or divine bodies which place before men's eyes perfect images of manly force, of athletic perfection, of militant virtue, of unaffected nobility, of unalterable serenity and you will arrive at the first conception of their genius and their art.

THE PERIOD.

THE PERIOD.

We have now to take another step and consider a new characteristic of Greek civilization. The Greek of ancient Greece is not only Greek but again he is antique; he does not differ from the Englishman or Spaniard, because, being of another race, he has other aptitudes and inclinations; he differs from the Englishman, the Spaniard and the modern Greek in this, that, placed at an anterior epoch of history, he entertains other ideas and other sentiments. He precedes us and we follow him. He did not build his civilization on ours; we built our civilization on his, and on many others. He is on the lower floor while we are on the second or third story. Hence certain results which are infinite in number and importance. What can differ more than two lives, one on a level with the ground with all the doors opening on the country, and the other perched aloft and confined to the small compartments of a modern dwelling-house? The contrast may be expressed in

two words: their life, mental and physical, is simple; ours is complicated. Their art, therefore, is simpler than ours, and the conception they form of man's body and soul provides material for works which our civilization no longer warrants.

I.

A glance at the outward features of their life suffices to show how simple it is. Civilization, in migrating towards the north, had to provide for all sorts of wants which it was not obliged to satisfy in its early condition at the south. In a moist or cold climate, like that of Gaul, Germany, England and North America, man consumes more; he requires closer and more substantial houses, thicker and warmer clothes, a greater amount of fire and light, more shelter and food, more implements and occupations. He necessarily becomes manufacturing, and, as his demands grow with their gratification, he devotes three quarters of his energy to the accumulation of comforts. The conveniences he provides for himself, however, are so many restraints and embarrassments to him, the machinery of his self-gratification keeping him in bondage. How many things are essential nowadays in the dress of an ordinary man! How many more in the toilette of a woman even of

an average station! Two or three wardrobes are not sufficient. You are aware that to-day the women of Naples and Athens borrow our fashions. The accoutrement of a pallikare is as ample as our own. Our northern civilizations, in flowing back upon the unprogressive people of the south, bear to them a foreign costume unnecessarily complicated; we have to go to remote districts, or descend to the poorest class, to find, as at Naples, lazzaroni clad in a kilt, and women, as in Arcadia, wearing but one garment, in short, people who reduce and adapt their dress to their slight climatic exigencies. In ancient Greece a short tunic, without sleeves, for the male, and, for the female, a long tunic, reaching to the feet and brought upward over the shoulders, falling down to the waist, constituted all that was essential in their costume; add to this a large square mantle, and for the woman a veil when she went out, together with sandals, which were often worn,—Socrates only put them on on festival occasions, people frequently going barefoot and likewise bareheaded. All these habiliments could be removed with a turn of the hand; there is no restraint upon the figure; its forms

are indicated and the nude is apparent through their openings and in the movements of the body. They were wholly taken off in the gymnasia, in the stadium and in many of the religious dances; "It is a Greek peculiarity," says Pliny, "to conceal nothing." Dress, with them, is simply a loose accessory which leaves full play to the body, and which can be thrown aside in a moment. There is the same simplicity in man's second envelop, that is to say, his dwelling. Compare a house of St. Germain or Fontainebleau with a house in Pompeii or Herculaneum, two handsome provincial cities which, in relation to Rome, stand in the same position as St. Germain or Fontainebleau do to Paris; sum up all that composes a passable dwelling of the present time, a tall structure of hewn stone two or three stories high, glazed windows, wall-paper, hangings, blinds, double and triple curtains, stoves, chimneys, carpets, beds, chairs, all kinds of furniture, innumerable luxurious trifles and household implements, and contemplate these alongside of the frail walls of a Pompeian house, with its ten or twelve closets ranged around a small court in which bubbles a stream of water, its

delicate painting and its small bronzes; it is a slight shelter to sleep under at night, and for a siesta during the day; in which to enjoy the fresh air and contemplate delicate arabesques and beautiful harmonies of color. The climate requires nothing more.* White-washed walls which a robber could enter and still barren of paintings in the time of Pericles; a bed with a few coverings, a chest, some beautiful painted vases, weapons hung up and a lamp of a primitive shape; a house of very small dimensions, sometimes only one story high, sufficed for a noble Athenian. He lived out of doors, in the open air, under porticoes, in the Agora, in the gymnasia, while the public edifices which protect him in public life are as indifferently furnished as his own home. Instead of a palace like that of the Corps Legislatif or the Houses of Parliament in London, with its internal arrangement, seats, lights, library and refreshment hall, every kind of apartment and service provided for, he possesses an empty space, the Pnyx, and a few steps of stone serving the speaker as a tribune.

* See for the details of private life the "Charicles" of Becker, and especially the Excursus.

We are now erecting an opera-house, and we demand a spacious front, four or five vast pavilions, reception-rooms, saloons and passages of every description, a wide circle for the attendants, an enormous stage, a gigantic receptacle overhead for scenery and an infinity of boxes and rooms for actors and managers; we expend forty millions, and the house is to hold two thousand spectators. In Greece a theatre contained from thirty to forty thousand spectators, and cost twenty times less than with us; the means are furnished by nature; a hillside in which circular rows of benches are cut, an altar at the foot, and in the centre, a high sculptured wall like that at Orange, to give a reverberation to the actor's voice, the sun for a chandelier, and, for distant scenery, sometimes the sparkling sea and, again, groups of mountains softened in light. They obtain magnificence through economy, their amusements as well as public business being provided for with a degree of perfection unattainable through our profuse expenditure.

Let us pass to moral organizations. A State of the present day comprises thirty or forty million men spread over a territory consisting of thousands of

square miles. It is for this reason more stable than an antique city. On the other hand, however, it is much more complicated, and for a man to perform any duty in it he must be a specialist. Public functions consequently are specific like the rest. The mass take part in general matters only from time to time and through elections; it lives, or contrives to live, in the provinces, unable to form any personal or precise opinions, reduced to vague impressions and blind emotions, compelled to entrust itself to better informed persons whom it despatches to the capital and who act for it in making war and peace and in imposing taxes. The same substitution takes place in relation to religion, justice, the army and the navy. In each of these services we have a body of special agents; a long apprenticeship is necessary to do duty in them; they are beyond the reach of a majority of the citizens. We have nothing to do with them; we have delegates who, appointed by each other or chosen by the State, combat, navigate, judge or pray for us. We cannot do otherwise; the duty is too complicated to be performed hap-hazard by the first comer; the priest must have passed through

a seminary, the magistrate through a law school, the officer through the preparatory schools of the barracks and the navy, and the civil administrator through examinations and clerkships. In a small State, on the contrary, like the Greek city, the common man is on a level with every public requirement; society is not divided up into governed and governors; there is no retired class, everybody being an active citizen. The Athenian decides for himself on common interests; five or six thousand citizens listen to orators and vote on the public square; it is the market-place; people resort to it to pass laws and decrees as well as to sell their wine and olives; the national territory being simply a suburb, the rustic travels but a short distance farther than the citizen. The business that brings him, moreover, is within his capacity, for it is no more than parish interests, inasmuch as the city is merely a township. He has no difficulty in knowing what course to pursue with Megara or Corinth; his personal experience and daily impressions are adequate to this end; he has no need to be a professional politician, versed in geography, history, statistics and the like. In a sim-

ilar manner, he is priest in his own house, and from time to time the pontiff of his phratry or tribe; for his faith is a beautiful fairy tale, the ceremony he performs consisting of a dance or chant familiar to him from his infancy, and of a banquet at which he presides in a certain garment.—Again, he is judge in the civil, criminal, and religious dicasterion, an advocate, and obliged to plead in his own suit. A man of the South, a Greek, is naturally of a vivacious intellect and a fluent and fine speaker; laws are not yet multiplied and jumbled together in a code and in confusion; he knows them in a mass; pleaders cite them to him, and, moreover, custom allows him to consult his instincts, his common sense, his feeling, his passions, to as great an extent, at least, as the strict letter and legal arguments.—If he is rich he is an *impresario.* You are aware of their theatre being less complicated than ours, and that a Greek, an Athenian, always has a taste for seeing dancers, singers, and actors.—Rich or poor he is a soldier; military art being still primitive and the machinery of war unknown, the national militia forms the army. There was no better one up to the appearance of the

Romans. In order to organize it and form the perfect soldier, two conditions are requisite, and these two conditions are provided by the common education, without special instruction, drill, discipline or exercise in the barracks. They require, on the one hand, that each soldier shall be as good a gladiator as possible, with the most robust, supple and agile body, the best calculated to strike, ward off blows and run; the gymnasia suffice for this purpose; they are the youths' colleges; whole days and long years are devoted to teaching them wrestling, jumping, running, and throwing the discus, and, methodically, every limb and every muscle is exercised and fortified. On the other hand, they require the soldiery to march, run and perform their evolutions in regular order; the orchestra suffices for this purpose; all their national and religious festivals teach children and young people the art of forming and separating groups; at Sparta, the chorus of the public dance and of the military company* are arranged on the same plan. Thus prepared for it by their social arrangements, we can comprehend how the citizen becomes

* *Choros* and *Lochos.*

a soldier without an effort and from the very beginning.—He gets to be a mariner without much greater apprenticeship. A ship of war in those days was only a coasting vessel, and contained, at most, two hundred men, and never lost sight of land. In a city with a port, and which is supported by a maritime trade, there is no one who cannot manœuvre a vessel of this description, and who cannot judge of, or soon learn, the signs of the weather, the chances of the wind, positions and distances, the technics in full, and every accessory, which our sailors and marine officers acquire only after ten years' study and practice. All these peculiarities of antique life proceed from the same cause, which is the simplicity of a civilization without any precedent; and all end in the same effect, which is the simplicity of a well-balanced mind, no group of aptitudes and inclinations being developed at the expense of others, free of any exclusive direction, and not deformed by any special function. We have at the present day the cultivated and the uncultivated man, the citizen and the peasant, the provincial and the Parisian, besides as many distinct species as there are classes, profes-

sions and trades; the individual everywhere penned up in compartments of his own making and fettered with innumerable self-assigned necessities. Less artificial, less special, less remote from the primitive condition of things, the Greek acted in a political circle better proportioned to human faculties, amidst social ways more favorable to the maintenance of the animal faculties. Nearer to a natural life and less bound down by a superadded civilization he was more emphatically man.

II.

These are but the surroundings and the exterior moulds which shape the individual. Let us look into the individual himself, his sentiments and his ideas; we shall be yet more impressed with the distance between these and our own. Two kinds of culture fashion them in every age and in every land, religious culture and secular culture, both operating in the same sense, formerly to maintain them simple, now to render them complex. Modern people are Christian, and Christianity is a religion of second growth which opposes natural instinct. We may liken it to a violent contraction which has inflected the primitive attitude of the human mind. It proclaims, in effect, that the world is sinful, and that man is depraved—which certainly is indisputable in the century in which it was born. According to it, man must change his ways. Life here below is simply an exile; let us turn our eyes upward to our celestial

home. Our natural character is vicious; let us stifle natural desires and mortify the flesh. The experience of our senses and the knowledge of the wise are inadequate and delusive; let us accept the light of revelation, faith and divine illumination. Through penitence, renunciation and meditation let us develop within ourselves the spiritual man; let our life be an ardent awaiting of deliverance, a constant sacrifice of will, an undying yearning for God, a revery of sublime love, occasionally rewarded with ecstasy and a vision of the infinite. For fourteen centuries the ideal of this life was the anchorite or monk. If you would estimate the power of such a conception and the grandeur of the transformation it imposes on human faculties and habits, read, in turn, the great Christian poem and the great pagan poem, one the Divine Comedy and the other the Odyssey and the Iliad. Dante has a vision and is transported out of our little ephemeral sphere into eternal regions; he beholds its tortures, its expiations and its felicities; he is affected by superhuman anguish and horror; all that the infuriate and subtle imagination of the lover of justice and the executioner can conceive of he sees,

suffers and sinks under. He then ascends into light; his body loses its gravity; he floats involuntarily, led by the smile of a radiant woman; he listens to souls in the shape of voices and to passing melodies; he sees choirs of angels, a vast rose of living brightness representing the virtues and the celestial powers; sacred utterances and the dogmas of truth reverberate in ethereal space. At this fervid height, where reason melts like wax, both symbol and apparition, one effacing the other, merge into mystic bewilderment, the entire poem, infernal or divine, being a dream which begins with horrors and ends in ravishment. How much more natural and healthy is the spectacle which Homer presents! We have the Troad, the isle of Ithaca and the coasts of Greece; still at the present day we follow in his track; we recognize the forms of mountains, the color of the sea, the jutting fountains, the cypress and the alders in which the sea-birds perched; he copied a steadfast and persistent nature; with him throughout we plant our feet on the firm ground of truth. His book is a historical document; the manners and customs of his contemporaries were such as he describes; his Olym

pus itself is a Greek family. We are not obliged to strain and exalt ourselves to ascertain if we possess the sentiments he utters, nor to imagine the world he paints—the combats, voyages, banquets, public discourses, and private conversations, the various scenes of real life, of friendships, of paternal and conjugal affection, the craving for fame and action, the quarrels and reconciliations, the love of festivals, the relish of existence, every emotion and every passion of the natural man. He confines himself to the visible circle realized by every generation of human experience; he does not travel out of it; this world suffices for him; it alone is important, the beyond being simply the vague habitation of dissatisfied spectres when Ulysses encounters Achilles in Hades and congratulates him on being first among the dead, the latter replies:

> Noble Ulysses, speak not thus of death
> As if thou could'st console me. I would be
> A laborer on earth and serve for hire
> Some man of mean estate who makes scant cheer,
> Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down
> To death. Speak rather of my noble son;
> Whether or not he joined the war to take
> A place among the foremost in the fight.

Thus beyond the grave he is still most concerned with this present life. Then,

> ——the soul of swift Æacides
> Over the meadows thick with asphodel
> Departed with long strides, well-pleased to hear
> From me the story of his son's renown.*

Different shades of the same sentiment reappear at every epoch of Greek civilization; theirs is the world lit up by sunshine; the hope and consolation of the dying parent is the survival in bright day of his son, his glory, his tomb, and his patrimony. "The happiest man I have seen," said Solon to Crœsus, "is Tellus of Athens; for his country was flourishing in his day, and he himself had sons both beautiful and good, and he lived to see children born to each of them, and these children all grow up; and farther, because after a life spent in what our people look upon as comfort, his end was surpassingly glorious. In a battle between the Athenians and their neighbors, near Eleusis, he came to the assistance of his countrymen, routed the foe, and died upon the field most gallantly. The Athenians gave him a

* The Odyssey, translated by W. C. Bryant.

public funeral on the spot where he fell, and paid him the highest honors."*

When philosophical reflection comes to dwell upon it the beyond does not appear terrible, infinite, disproportioned to this present life, as certain as it, exhaustless in torments and delights, and like a frightful gulf or an angelic elysium.—"One of two things," said Socrates to his judges, "either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king, will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death

* Rawlinson's Herodotus.

is the journey to another place, and there, as men say all the dead are, what good, oh my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If, indeed, when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Æacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musæus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again."* In both cases, then, we "should nourish good hope on the subject of death." Twenty centuries later, Pascal, taking up the same question and the same doubt, could see for the incredulous no other hope but "the horrible alternative of utter annihilation or eternal misery." A contrast like this shows the turmoil which for eighteen hundred years has disordered the human mind. The prospect of a happy or miserable eternity destroyed its balance; up to the close of the middle ages, with this incalculable weight upon it, it was

* The Dialogues of Plato, translated by Jowett.

like uncertain and disjointed scales, now up to the highest point, now down to the lowest, and always in extremes. When, toward the Renaissance, man's oppressed nature recovered itself and assumed the ascendant, the old ascetic and monastic doctrine stood there to confront and to beat it back, not only with its traditions and institutions, maintained or revived, but again with the enduring unrest with which it had infected dolorous souls and over-excited imaginations. This discord subsists at the present day; there are in us and about us two moral theories, two ideas of nature and of life, whose constant antagonism makes us feel the harmonious ease of a young society where natural instincts displayed themselves intact and loyal under a religion that favored instead of repressed their outgrowth.

If religious culture, with us, has grafted incongruous sentiments on spontaneous tendencies, secular culture has confused our mind with a maze of elaborated and foreign notions. Compare the first and most powerful of educations, that which language gives, in Greece and among ourselves. Our modern tongues, Italian, Spanish, French, and English are

dialects, the shapeless remains of a beautiful idiom impaired by a long decadence and which importations and intermixtures have still further tended to change and obscure. They resemble those edifices built with the ruins of an ancient temple and with other materials picked up at random; the result of which is that, with Latin stones, mutilated and combined in another style, along with pebbles gathered in the street and other rubbish, we have constructed the building in which we live, once a gothic castle and nowadays the modern mansion. Our mind dwells in it because it has become domiciliated; but how much more freely did that of the Greeks move in theirs! We do not readily comprehend our somewhat generalized terms; they are not transparent; they do not expose their root, the evident fact from which they are derived; words have to be explained to us which formerly man understood without an effort through the sole virtue of analogy,—*genus*, *species*, *grammar*, *calculus*, *economy*, *law*, *thought*, *conception*, and the rest. Even in German, where this obstacle is slighter, the conducting thread is wanting. Almost the whole of our philosophic and scien-

tific vocabulary is foreign; we are obliged to know Greek and Latin to make use of it properly, and, most frequently, employ it badly. Innumerable terms find their way out of this technical vocabulary into common conversation and literary style, and hence it is that we now speak and think with words cumbersome and difficult to manage. We adopt them ready made and conjoined, we repeat them according to routine; we make use of them without considering their scope and without a nice appreciation of their sense; we only approximate to that which we would like to express. Fifteen years are necessary for an author to learn to write, not with genius, for that is not to be acquired, but with clearness, sequence, propriety and precision. He finds himself obliged to weigh and investigate ten or twelve thousand words and diverse expressions, to note their origin, filiation and relationships, to rebuild on an original plan, his ideas and his whole intellect. If he has not done it, and he wishes to reason on rights, duties, the beautiful, the State or any other of man's important interests, he gropes about and stumbles; he gets entangled in long, vague phrases, in sonorous

commonplaces, in crabbed and abstract formulas. Look at the newspapers and the speeches of our popular orators. It is especially the case with workmen who are intelligent but who have had no classical education; they are not masters of words and, consequently, of ideas; they use a refined language which is not natural to them; it is a perplexity to them and consequently confuses their minds; they have had no time to filter it drop by drop. This is an enormous disadvantage, from which the Greeks were exempt. There was no break with them between the language of concrete facts and that of abstract reasoning, between the language spoken by the people and that of the learned; the one was a counterpart of the other; there was no term in any of Plato's dialogues which a youth, leaving his gymnasia, could not comprehend; there is not a phrase in any of Demosthenes' harangues which did not readily find a lodging-place in the brain of an Athenian peasant or blacksmith. Attempt to translate into Greek one of Pitt's or Mirabeau's discourses, or an extract from Addison or Nicole, and you will be obliged to recast and transpose the thought; you will be led to find

for the same thoughts expressions more akin to facts and to concrete experience;* a flood of light will heighten the prominence of all the truths and of all the errors; that which you were wont to call natural and clear will seem to you affected and semi-obscure, and you will perceive by force of contrast why, among the Greeks, the instrument of thought being more simple, it did its office better and with less effort.

On the other hand, the work with the instrument, has become complicated, and out of all proportion. Besides Greek ideas, we have all that have accumulated for the past eighteen centuries. We have been overburdened, from the first, with our acquisitions. On issuing from a brutal barbarism at the dawn of the middle age, a simple intellect, which could scarcely do more than stammer, had to be en-

* I would refer the reader to the writings of Paul-Louis Courier, who formed his style on the Greek. Compare his translation of the first chapters of Herodotus with those of Larcher. In "François le Champi," the "Maitres Sonneurs" and in the "Mare au Diable," George Sand attains in a great degree to the simplicity, naturalness and admirable directness of the Greek style. The contrast is singular between this and the modern style which she employs when she speaks in her own name or when she gives the conversation of cultivated characters.

cumbered with the remains of classic antiquity and an ancient ecclesiastical literature, with a cavilling Byzantine theology, and the vast and subtle Aristotelian encyclopedia rendered still more obscure and subtle by his Arabian commentators. Then, after the Renaissance, came a revived antiquity to superadd its conceptions to ours, frequently to confuse our ideas and wrongfully impose on us its authority, doctrines and examples; to make us Latin and Greek in mind and language like the Italian men of letters of the fifteenth century; to prescribe to us its dramatic forms and the style of the seventeenth century; to suggest to us its political maxims and utopias as in the time of Rousseau and during the Revolution. The stream, nevertheless, greatly enlarged, grew with the immense influx; with the daily increasing volume of experimental science and human invention; with the separate contributions of growing civilizations, all of them spread over five or six grand territories. Add, after another century, the knowledge diffused among modern languages and literatures, the discovery of Oriental and remote civilizations, the extraordinary progress of history, reviving

before our eyes the habits and sentiments of so many races and so many ages; the current has become a river as variegated as it is enormous; all this is what a human mind is obliged to absorb, and it demands the genius, long life and patience of a Goethe to moderately appreciate it. How much more simple and limpid was the primitive source! In the best days of Greece a youth "learned to read, write, and cipher,* play the lyre, wrestle and to perform all other bodily exercises."† Education was reduced to this "for the children of the best families." Let us add, however, that in the house of the music-master he was taught how to sing a few national and religious odes, how to repeat passages from Homer, Hesiod and the lyric poets, the pæan to be sung in war and the song of Harmodius to be recited at the table. When he got to be older he listened in the Agora to the discourses of orators, to the decrees and the promulgation of the laws. In the time of Socrates, if inquisitive, he attended the disputes and dissertations of the sophists; he tried to procure a book by Anax-

* *Grammata.* As letters served as ciphers, this term includes all three.

† The "Theages" of Plato.

agoras, or by Zeno of Elea; a few interested themselves in geometrical problems; but, as a whole, education was entirely gymnastic and musical, while the few hours that were devoted to a philosophical discussion, between two spells of bodily exercise, can no more be compared to our fifteen or twenty years of study, than their twenty or thirty rolls of papyrus manuscript to our libraries of three million volumes. All these opposing conditions may be reduced to one, that which separates a fresh and impulsive civilization from an elaborate and complex civilization. Fewer means and tools, fewer industrial implements and social wheels, fewer words learnt and ideas acquired; a smaller heritage and lighter baggage and thus more easily managed; a single, straightforward growth without moral crisis or disparity, and consequently a freer play of the faculties, a healthier conception of life, a less disturbed, less jaded, less deformed spirit and intellect; this is the capital trait of their existence and it will be found in their art.

III.

The ideal work, indeed, has ever been the summary of real life. Examine the modern spirit and you will find modifications, inequalities, maladies, hypertrophies, so to say, of sentiments and faculties of which its art is the verification.—In the middle ages the exaggerated development of the inner and spiritual man, the pursuit of tender and sublime revery, the worship of sorrow and the contempt of the flesh, lead the excited feelings and imagination on to visions and seraphic adoration. You are familiar with those of the "Imitation" and the "Fioretti" those of Dante and Petrarch, and with the subtle refinements and extravagant follies of chivalry and the courts of love. In painting and sculpture, consequently, the figures are ugly or lacking in beauty, often out of proportion and not viable, almost always meagre, attenuated, wasted and suffering; overcome and absorbed by some conception which turns their thoughts

away from this nether world; transfixed in anticipation or in ravishment; displaying the meek sadness of the cloister or the radiance of ecstasy, too frail or too impassioned to live and already belonging to paradise.—At the time of the Renaissance the universal amelioration of the human condition, the example of antiquity revived and understood, the transports of the mind liberated and ennobled by its grand discoveries, renew pagan sentiments and art. Mediæval institutions and rites however still subsist; in Italy as in Flanders, you see in the finest works the disagreeable incongruity of figures and subjects; there are martyrs who seem to have issued from an antique gymnasium; Christs consisting of destroying Jupiters or tranquil Apollos; Virgins worthy of profane love; angels with the archness of Cupids; Magdalens often the most blooming of sirens, and St. Sebastians only so many hale Hercules; in short, an assembly of male and female saints who, amidst the implements of penance and passion, retain the vigorous health, the lively carnations and the spirited attitudes common to the joyous fêtes of perfect athletes and noble young Athenian virgins.—At the present

day, the accumulations of the human brain, the multiplicity and discord of doctrines, the excesses of cerebral application, sedentary habits, an artificial regime and the feverish excitement of capitals have augmented nervous agitation, extended the craving for new and strong sensations, and developed morbid melancholy, vague aspirations and illimitable lusts. Man is no longer what he was, and what, perhaps, he would have done well to remain, an animal of superior grade, happy in thinking and acting on the earth which nourishes him and beneath the sun which gives him light. On the contrary, he is a prodigious brain, an infinite spirit of which his members are only appendages and of which his senses are simply servants; insatiable in his curiosity and ambition, ever in quest and on conquest, with tremors and outbursts which rack his animal organization and ruin his corporeal strength; led hither and thither within the confines of the actual world and even into the depths of the imaginary world; now exalted and now overwhelmed with the immensity of his acquisitions and of his performances; raging after the impossible or buried in occupation; grand and intense like Beet

hoven, Heine and the Faust of Goethe, or restrained by the pressure within his social cell, or warped all on one side by a specialty and monomania like the characters of Balzac. For this spirit plastic art no longer suffices; its interest in a figure centres not in the members, the trunk and the entire animated framework, but in the expressive head, the mobile physiognomy, the transparent soul declared in gesture, passion or incorporeal thought pulsating and overflowing through form and externalities; if it loves the beautiful sculptural form that is owing to education, after long preparatory culture, and through the disciplined taste of the dilettant. Multiple and cosmopolite as it is it finds interest in all phases of art, in every period of the past, in every grade of society, and in all the situations of life; it can appreciate the resurrections of foreign and ancient styles, incidents of rustic, popular or barbarous customs, foreign and remote landscapes, all that affords aliment for curiosity, documents for history and subjects for emotion or instruction. Satiated and dissipated as it is it demands of art powerful and strange sensations, new effects of color, physiognomy and site, stimulants

which, at any cost, disturb, provoke, or amuse it, in short, a style which depends on manner, theory, and exaggeration.

In Greece, on the contrary, the sentiments are simple, and, consequently, taste. Consider Greek dramatic works; there are no profound and complicated characters in them like those of Shakspeare; no intrigue cleverly contrived and unravelled, no surprises. The piece turns upon a heroic legend with which people are familiar from their infancy; they know beforehand its incidents and catastrophe. The action can be described in a few words. Ajax, seized with delirium, massacres the cattle of the camp, thinking he is slaying his enemies; chagrined at his folly, he bewails it and kills himself. Philoctetes, wounded, is abandoned on an island with his weapons; he is sought for and found because his arrows are needed; he becomes exasperated, refuses, and, at the command of Hercules, yields. The comedies of Menander, which we know through those of Terence, are made, so to say, out of nothing; it takes two of them to make one Roman piece; the richest scarcely contains the matter of one scene in our comedies. Read

the opening of the "Republic," in Plato, the "Syracuse Women" of Theocritus, the "Dialogues" of Lucian, the last Attic poet, or again, the "Cyropedia" and "Œconomicus" of Xenophon; there is no aim at effect, every thing being uniform; they are common, every-day scenes, the merit of which lies in their charming naturalness; there is no strong emphasis, no vehement, piquant trait; you scarcely smile, and yet are pleased just as when you stop before a wild flower or a limpid brook. The characters sit down and get up, look at each other and say the simplest things with no more effort than the painted figures on the walls of Pompeii. With our forced and paralyzed taste, accustomed to strong drink, we are inclined, at first, to pronounce this an insipid beverage; but, after moistening our lips with it for a few months, we are unwilling to imbibe any but this pure water, and find other literature spice, ragout or poison.—Trace this disposition in their art, and especially in that we are now studying, sculpture. It is owing to this turn of mind that they have brought it to perfection, and that it is truly their national art, for there is no art which more demands a

simplicity of mind, sentiment and taste. A statue is a large piece of marble or bronze, and a large statue generally stands isolated upon a pedestal; it could not express too vehement action nor a too impassioned air, such as painting admits of, and which is allowable in a bas-relief, for this reason, that the figure would seem affected, got up for effect, running the risk of falling into the style of Bernini. A statue, moreover, is solid; its limbs and torso are weighty; the spectator moves around it and realizes its material mass; it is, besides, generally nude, or almost nude; the statuary, accordingly, is obliged to give the trunk and members equal importance with the head, and to appreciate animal life to as great an extent as moral life. Greek civilization is the only one which has conformed to these two conditions. At this stage of things, and in this form of culture, the body is an interesting object; the spirit has not subordinated it and cast it in the background; it has its own importance. The spectator attaches equal value to its different parts, noble or ignoble, to the breast which breathes so freely, to the strong and flexible neck, to the muscles rising and falling around

the spine, to the arms which project the discus, to the legs and feet whose energetic spring impel the man ahead in racing and jumping. A youth in Plato reproaches his rival for having a stiff body and a slender neck. Aristophanes promises the young man who will follow his advice the best of health and gymnastic beauty: "You will ever have a stout chest, a clear complexion, broad shoulders, large hips... You shall spend your time in the gymnastic schools sleek and blooming; you shall descend to the Academy and run races beneath the sacred olives along with some modest compeer, crowned with white reeds, redolent of yew and careless ease, and of leaf-shedding white poplar, rejoicing in the season of spring, when the plane-tree whispers to the elm."* These are the pleasures and perfections of a blood horse, and Plato somewhere compares young men to fine coursers dedicated to the gods, and which are allowed to stray at will in their pasture-grounds with a view to see if they will not through instinct obtain wisdom and virtue. Such men have no need of study to enable them to contemplate understandingly and

* Aristophanes, translated by Hickie; Bohn's Classical Library.

with pleasure a form like the "Theseus" of the Parthenon or the "Achilles" of the Louvre, the easy position of the body on the pelvis, the suppleness of the joints and limbs, the clean curve of the heel, the network of moving and flowing muscles underneath the firm and transparent skin. They appreciate its beauty the same as an English gentleman fond of hunting appreciates the breed, structure and fine points of the dogs and horses he raises. They are not surprised to see it naked. Modesty has not yet become prudery; the spirit, with them, does not sit by itself enthroned at sublime heights to obscure and degrade organs which fulfil less noble functions; it does not blush at and does not hide them; they excite no shame and provoke no smile. The terms which designate them are neither offensive, provocative nor scientific; Homer's mention of them is the same in tone as that of other portions of the body. The thoughts they awaken are, in Aristophanes, joyous without being filthy as in Rabelais. There is no secret literature devoted to them which austere people and delicate minds avoid. The idea occurs over and over again, on the stage, before full audiences, at

the festivals in honor of the gods, in the presence of magistrates, in the phallus borne by young virgins and which of itself is invoked as a divinity.* In Greece all the great natural forces are divine, the divorce between the animal and the spirit not yet having taken place.

Here, then, we have the living body, complete and without a veil, admired and glorified, standing on its pedestal without scandal and exposed to all eyes. What is its purpose and what idea, through sympathy, is the statue to convey to spectators? An idea which, to us, is almost without meaning because it belongs to another age and another epoch of the human mind. The head is without significance; unlike ours it is not a world of graduated conceptions, excited passions and a medley of sentiments; the face is not sunken, sharp and disturbed; it has not many characteristics, scarcely any expression, and is generally in repose. Hence its suitableness for the statuary; fashioned as it is to-day and as we now see it, its importance would be out of proportion to and a sacrifice of the rest; we would cease to look at the

* Aristophanes, in the "Acharnians.

trunk and limbs or would be tempted to clothe them. On the contrary, in the Greek statue, the head excites no more interest than the trunk and other portions of the figure; its lines and its planes are simply continuations of other lines and other planes; its physiognomy is not meditative, but calm and almost dull; you detect no habitude, no aspiration, no ambition transcending present physical existence, the general attitude, like the entire action, conspiring in the same sense. When a figure displays energetic action for a given purpose, like the "Discobulus" at Rome, the "Fighting Gladiator" in the Louvre, or the "Dancing Fawn" of Pompeii, the effect, entirely physical, exhausts every idea and every desire within its capacity; so long as the discus is well launched, the blow well bestowed or parried, the dance animated and in good tune, it is satisfied, the mind making no further effort. Generally speaking, however, the attitude is a tranquil one; the figure does nothing, and says nothing; it is not fixed, wholly concentrated in a profound or eager expression; it is at rest, relaxed, without weariness; now standing, slightly leaning on one or the other foot now half turning,

now half reclining; a moment ago it was running like the young Lacedemonian girl;* now, like the Flora, it holds a crown; its action, almost always, is one of indifference; the idea which animates it is so indefinite and, for us, so far removed that we still, after a dozen hypotheses, cannot precisely determine what the Venus of Milo is doing. It lives, and that suffices, and it sufficed for the spectator of antiquity. The contemporaries of Pericles and Plato did not require violent and surprising effects to stimulate weary attention or to irritate an uneasy sensibility. A blooming and healthy body, capable of all virile and gymnastic actions, a man or woman of fine growth and noble race, a serene form in full light, a simple and natural harmony of lines happily commingled, was the most animated spectacle they could dwell on. They desired to contemplate man proportioned to his organs and to his condition and endowed with every perfection within these limits; they demanded nothing more and nothing less; any thing besides would have struck them as extravagance, deformity

* See the collection of casts by M. Ravaisson in the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

or disease. Such is the circle within which the simplicity of their culture kept them, and beyond which the complexity of our culture has impelled us; herein they encountered the art, statuary, which is appropriate to it; hence it is that we have left this art behind us, we of to-day having to resort to them for our models.

INSTITUTIONS

I.

If ever the correspondence of art with life disclosed itself through visible traits, it is in the history of Greek statuary. To produce man in marble or bronze, the Greek first formed the living man, perfect sculpture with them being developed at the same moment as the institution through which was produced the perfect body. One accompanies the other, like the Dioscuri, and, through a fortunate con junction, the doubtful dawn of distant history is at once lit up by their two growing rays.

The two appear together in the first half of the seventh century (B. C.). At this epoch occur the great technical discoveries of art. About 689 Butades of Sicyon undertakes to model and bake figures of clay, which leads him to decorate the tops of roofs with masks. At the same time Rhoikos and Theodoros of Samos discover the process of casting bronze in a mould. Towards 650 Malas of Chios executes the first statues in marble, and, in successive olympi

ads, during the latter part of that century, and the whole of the following century, we see statuary blocked out to become finished and perfect after the glorious Median wars. This is the period at which orchestral and gymnastic institutions become regular and fully developed. A social cycle terminates, that of Homer and the epos, while another begins, that of Archilochus, Callinus, Terpander and Olympus and of lyric poesy. Between Homer and his followers, who belong to the ninth and eighth centuries, and the inventors of new metres and new music who belong to the next century, there occurs a vast transformation of social habits and organization.

Man's horizon becomes more and more extended every day. The Mediterranean is thoroughly explored; Sicily and Egypt, which Homer only knew through storied reports, become well known. In 632 the Samians were the first to sail as far as Tartessus, and, out of the tithes of their profits, they consecrated to their goddess Hera a huge bronze cup decorated with griffons and supported by three kneeling figures, eleven cubits high. Multiplied colonies arise to people and cultivate the coasts of Magna Græcia,

Sicily, Asia Minor and the Euxine. Industrial pursuits of all kinds flourish; the fifty-oared boats of ancient poems become galleys with two hundred rowers. A native of Chios discovers the art of softening, tempering and welding iron. The Dorian temple is erected. Money, figures and writing, of which Homer was ignorant, are known. There is a change in tactics; men fight on foot and in line instead of combating in chariots and without discipline. Human society, so scattered in the Iliad and Odyssey, becomes more closely united. Instead of an Ithaca where each family lives apart under its independent head, where there is no public authority, where twenty years could pass without convoking a public assembly, walled and guarded cities, provided with magistrates and subject to a police, are founded and become republics of equal citizens under elected chiefs.

At the same time, and in consequence of this, intellectual culture is diversified, diffused and re-invigorated. It unquestionably remains poetic as prose does not appear until later, but the monotonous melopœia which the epic hexameter sustains gives way to a multitude of varied songs and different metres

The pentameter is added to the hexameter; the trochee, iambic and anapest are invented; new and old metrical measures are combined in the distich, the strophe and others of all descriptions. The cithern which had but four strings receives seven; Terpander establishes his modes and gives the *nomes* of music;* Olympus, and, next, Thales succeed in adapting the rhythms of the cithern, flute and voice to the various shades of poetic diction which they accompany. Let us attempt to picture to ourselves this world, so remote, and whose fragments are almost all lost; there is none which differs so much from our own and which, to be comprehended, demands so great an effort of the imagination. It is nevertheless the primitive and enduring mould from which the Greek world issued.

When we form a conception of lyric poetry we recur at once to the odes of Victor Hugo or the stanzas of Lamartine, a poesy which is read silently or in a low voice, alongside of a friend in some quiet and secluded spot; our civilization renders po-

* These nomes were simple tunes from which others could be derived by slight variations. Smith's Dictionary.

esy the confidential intercourse of two kindred spirits. That of the Greeks was uttered not only in a loud tone but it was declaimed and chanted to the sound of instruments and, again, accompanied with pantomime and dance. Suppose Delsarte or Madame Viardot singing a *recitative* from "Iphigenia" or "Orpheus," Rouget de l'Isle or Rachel declaiming the "Marseillaise" or a chorus from Gluck's "Alceste," such as we see on the stage, with a coryphaeus, orchestra and groups moving about before the steps of a temple, not as nowadays before the footlights and surrounded by painted scenery, but on a public square and beneath the splendor of sunshine, and you will have the least imperfect idea of Grecian fêtes and customs. The entire man, body and soul, is in commotion; the verses that remain to us are simply the detached leaves of an opera libretto. At a funeral in a Corsican village the "vocératrice" improvises and declaims songs of vengeance over the corpse of a murdered man; also wailing-songs over the coffin of a young girl who has died before her maturity. In the Calabrian mountains and in Sicily the young people, on days given up to dancing, rep-

resent in their postures and gestures petty dramas and amatory scenes. Imagine, in a similar climate, under a still finer sky, in small cities where everybody is well acquainted with each other, equally gesticulative and imaginative men, as quick in emotion and expression, with a still more animated and fresher impulse, more creative and ingenious mentally, and much more inclined to embellish every action and moment of human existence. This musical pantomime, which we only encounter in isolated fragments and in out-of-the-way places, is that which is to develope and branch out in a hundred different directions and furnish the matter for a complete literature; there is no sentiment that it will not express, no scene of public or private life which it will not adorn, no motive or situation to which it will not suffice. It becomes the natural language, as universal and of as common usage as our written or printed prose; the latter is a sort of dry notation by which nowadays one pure intellect communicates with another pure intellect; when compared with the wholly imitative and material language of the former it is nothing more than algebra and a residue.

The accent of the French language is uniform; it has no rhythmical modulation; its long and short syllables are slightly marked and scarcely distinguishable. One must have heard a musical tongue, the prolonged melody of a beautiful voice reciting one of Tasso's stanzas, to appreciate the effect of auricular sensation on inward emotion; to know what power sound and rhythm exercise over the entire being; how contagious their influence is throughout our nervous machinery. Such was that Greek language of which we have simply the skeleton. We see by the commentators and scholiasts that sound and measure were of equal importance with idea and image. The poet inventor of a species of metre invented a species of sensation. This or that group of long and short syllables is necessarily an *allegro*, another a *largo*, another a *scherzo*, and not only affects the thought, but likewise the action and music, its inflections and character. Thus did the age which produced a vast system of lyric poesy produce at the same stroke the no less vast orchestral system. We are familiar with the names of two hundred Greek dances. Up to sixteen years of age, at Athens, edu-

cation was entirely orchestral. "In those days," says Aristophanes, "the youth of the same quarter of the town marched together through the streets to the school of the Harp-master, in good order and with bare feet, even if it were to snow as thick as meal. There they had their places without sitting cross-legged, and were taught the hymn 'Mighty Pallas, devastator of cities,' or 'The shout heard afar,' raising their voices to a higher pitch with the strong and rugged harmony transmitted by their fathers."

A young man named Hippocleides, belonging to one of the first families, came to Sicyon to the court of the tyrant Cleisthenes and, being skilled in all physical exercises, was desirous of exhibiting his good education.* Ordering a flute-player to play an appropriate air, he danced it accordingly, and, soon after, causing a table to be brought, he got upon it and danced the Lacedemonian and Athenian figures.—Thus disciplined, they were both "singers and dancers,"† all furnishing all with noble, picturesque and poetic spectacles, and which at a later period

* Herodotus, VI. ch. cxix. † Lucian.

were obtained for hire. In the banquets of the clubs,* after the repast, they made libations and sang the pæon in honor of Apollo; and then came the fête properly so called (*Komos*), the pantomimic declamation, the lyric recitation to the sound of the cithern or flute, a solo followed by a refrain, as subsequently the song of Harmodius and Aristogiton, or a duett sung and danced, like, at a later period, in the banquet of Xenophon, the meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne. When a citizen constituted himself a tyrant, and wished to enjoy his position, he extended festivities of this kind around him and permanently established them. Polycrates of Samos had two poets, Ibycos and Anacreon, to superintend their arrangement and to compose for them music and verses. The actors of these poetic compositions consisted of the handsomest youths that could be found; Bathyll who played the flute and sang in the Ionian manner, Cleobulus with the beautiful virgin eyes, Simalos who wielded the *pectis* in the chorus, and Smerdis with the flowing locks whom they went in quest of among the Cicones of Thrace. It

* *Philities*, societies of friends.

was an operatic entertainment in private. The lyric poets of this epoch are, in a similar manner, chorus, masters; their dwelling is a species of conservatory,* a "House of the Muses:" there were several of them at Lesbos, besides that of Sappho, and which were conducted by women; they had pupils from the neighboring islands and coasts, from Miletus Colophon, Salamis and Pamphylia; here, during long years were taught music, recitation and the art of beautiful posture; they ridiculed the ignorant "peasant girls who did not know how to raise their dress above the ankle;" a corypheus was furnished by these establishments and choruses drilled for funeral lamentations and wedding pomps. Thus did private life throughout, in its ceremonies as well as amusements, contribute to make of man—in the best sense of the term, however, and with perfect dignity —what we designate as a singer, a figurant, a model and an actor.

Public life contributed to the same end. In Greece the orchestral system enters into religion and

* Simonides of Ceos usually occupied the "choregion" near the temple of Apollo.

politics, during peace and during war, in honor of the dead and to glorify victors. At the Ionian fête of Thargelia Mimnermus the poet and his mistress Nanno led the procession playing the flute. Callinos, Alcæus and Theognis exhorted their fellow-citizens or their party, in verses which they themselves sung. When the Athenians, repeatedly vanquished, had decreed the penalty of death against whoever should propose to recover Salamis, Solon, in a herald's costume, with Mercury's cap on his head, appeared suddenly in the assembly, mounted the herald's stone, and recited an elegy with so much power that the young men set out immediately "to deliver the lovely island and relieve Athens of shame and dishonor." The Spartans, on a campaign, recited songs in their tents. At evening, after their repast, each in turn arose to repeat and gesticulate the elegy, while the polemarchus gave to the one who bore away the prize a larger ration of meat. It was certainly a fine spectacle to see these tall young men, the strongest and best formed in Greece, with their long hair carefully fastened at the top of the head, and in a red tunic, broad polished bucklers and with

an air of hero and athlete, arise and sing an ode like this:—"With spirit let us fight for this land, and for our children die, being no longer chary of our lives. Fight, then, young men, standing fast one by another, nor be beginners of cowardly flight or fear. But rouse a great and valiant spirit in your breasts, and love not life, when ye contend with men. And the elders, whose limbs are no longer active, the old desert not or forsake. For surely this were shameful, that fallen amid the foremost champions, in front of the youths, an older man should lie low, having his head now white and his beard hoary, breathing out a valiant spirit in the dust; whilst he covers with his hands his gory loins.—Yet all this befits the young whilst he enjoys the brilliant bloom of youth. To mortal men and women he is lovely to look upon, whilst he lives; and noble when he has fallen in the foremost ranks.—Shameful too is a corpse lying low in the dust, wounded behind in the back by the point of a spear. Rather let every one with firm stride await the enemy, having both feet fixed on the ground biting his lip with his teeth, and having covered with the hollow of his broad shield thighs and

shins below and breast and shoulders. Then let him learn war by doing bold deeds, nor let him stand with his shield out of the range of weapons. But let each drawing nigh in close fray, hit his foe, wounding him with long lance and sword. Having set foot beside foot, and having fixed shield against shield and crest on crest, and helmet on helmet, and breast against breast struggle in fight with his man."*

There were similar songs for every circumstance of military life, and, among others, anapests for attacks to the sound of flutes. A spectacle of this kind occurred during the early enthusiasm of our Revolution, the day when Dumouriez, placing his hat on the end of his sword, and, scaling the parapet of Jemmapes, burst forth with the "Chant du Départ," the soldiers, on a run, singing it with him. In this great discordant clamor we can imagine a regular battle-chorus, an antique musical march. There was one of these after the victory of Salamis, when Sophocles, fifteen years old, and the handsomest youth in Athens, stripped himself as the ceremony prescribed

* Tyrtaeus. Bohn's classical library.

and danced a pæon in honor of Apollo in the midst of the military parade and before the trophy.

Worship, however, furnished a much larger contribution to the orchestral system than war or politics. According to the Greeks, the most gratifying spectacle to the gods was that afforded by fine, blooming, fully developed bodies in every attitude that could display health and strength. Hence it is that their most sacred festivals were operatic processions and grave ballets. Chosen citizens, and sometimes as at Sparta, the whole city* formed choruses in honor of the gods; each important town had its poets who composed music and verse, arranged the groups and evolutions, taught postures, drilled the actors a long time and regulated the costumes; we have but one instance of the kind at the present day to suggest the ceremony, that of the series of performances still given, every ten years, at Ober-Ammergau in Bavaria, where, since the middle ages, the inhabitants of the village, some five or six hundred persons, educated for it from infancy, solemnly perform Christ's Passion. In these fêtes, Alcman and Stesichorus,

* The Gymnopædia.

were at the same time poets, chapel-masters, and ballet directors; sometimes officiating themselves and as leaders in the great compositions wherein choruses of young men and women publicly appeared in heroic or divine legends. One of these sacred ballets, the dithyrambus, became, at a later period, Greek tragedy. This in itself, is at first simply a religious festival, reduced and perfected, and transported from the public square to the enclosure of a theatre; a succession of choruses broken by recitation and by the melopœia of a principal personage analogous to an "Evangile" by Sebastian Bach, the "Seven Works" of Haydn, an oratorio, or a Sixtine-chapel mass in which the same personages would sing the parts and constitute the groups.

Among all these poetic works, the most popular and the best adapted to making us comprehend these remote customs, are the cantatas which honor the victors in the four great games. People came to Pindar for these from all parts of Greece, Sicily and the islands. He went or sent his friend, Æneas of Stymphalus, to teach to the chorus the dance, the music, and the verses of his song. The festival began

with a procession and a sacrifice; afterwards the friends of the athlete, with his relatives and the principal men of the city, took their places at a banquet. Sometimes the cantata was sung during the procession and the line halted to recite the epode; again, after the feast, in a grand hall decked with cuirasses, lances, and swords.* The actors were companions of the athlete and performed their part with that southern energy which we encounter in Italy in the "Comedia dell 'Arte." They did not play, however, a comedy; their part was a serious one, or rather it was not a part; their pleasure was the noblest and deepest which it is given to man to experience, that of feeling himself beautiful and exalted, raised above vulgar existence, borne aloft to Olympic heights and radiance by remembrance of national heroes, by the invocation of mighty divinities, by the commemoration of ancestors, and by the applause of the country. For the victory of the athlete was a public triumph, and the poet's verses associated with it the city and all its divine protectors. Surrounded by these grand images, and exalted by

* See the verses of Alcæus on his own dwelling.

their own action, they attained to that supreme state which they called enthusiasm, indicating by this term that the god was in them; and, in effect, he was, for he enters into man when man feels his force and nobleness grow beyond all bounds through the concordant energy and sympathetic joyousness of the group with which he acts.

We of to-day no longer comprehend the poesy of Pindar; it is too local and too special; too full of occult meaning, too desultory, too closely adapted to Greek athletes of the sixth century; the verses that have come down to us are simply fragments; the accent, the pantomime, the chant, the sounds of instruments, the stage, the dance, and the procession, and other accessories which equal these in importance, have perished. It is only with extreme difficulty that we can figure to ourselves fresh minds that never read any thing, entertaining no abstract ideas, thinking only with imagery, in which every word aroused colored forms, souvenirs of stadium and gymnasia, temples, landscape, lustrous seacoasts, a population of figures animated and divine as in the days of Homer, and, perhaps still more divine. And yet

we catch from time to time an accent of these vibrating tones; we see as in a flash the grandiose attitude of the crowned youth, advancing out of the chorus to utter the words of Jason or the vow of Hercules; we divine the quick gesticulation, the outstretched arms, the large muscles swelling his breast; we encounter here and there a fragment of the poetic hue as brilliant as a lately disinterred painting in Pompeii.

Now it is the corypheus who advances: "As when a man takes and gives out of his wealthy hand a drinking-cup, frothing within with the dew of the grape, presenting it to a youthful son-in-law on his passing from one house to another, * * * so I now in sending liquid nectar, the gift of the Muses and the sweet fruit of my mind, to men who have carried off prizes from the contest, compliment them as victors at Olympia and Pytho."*

Now the chorus ceases and then the alternating half-chorus developes in *crescendo* the superb sonorousness of the rolling and triumphant ode. "Whatever Zeus loveth not flies in alarm on hearing the

* The Odes of Pindar, translated by Paley.

loud call of the Pierides both on earth and in the raging sea; and he who lies in the awful hell, that enemy of the gods, Typhœus with his hundred heads, whom erst the Cilician cave of many names did rear, but now the sea-enclosing cliffs beyond Cumæ (do hold), while Sicily presses down his shaggy breast, and that pillar of heaven keeps him fast, the snowy Ætna, all the year through the nurse of bright dazzling snow. From it are belched forth out of its inmost depths the purest jets of unapproachable fire. In the daytime the streams (of lava) pour forth a lurid torrent of smoke, but in the dark ruddy flame rolling in volumes carries rocks into the deep level sea with a horrible clatter. 'Tis that snake-formed monster that sends up from beneath these most dreadful founts of fire,—a prodigy marvellous to behold, and a wonder even to hear of from passers-by, how that he lies imprisoned between the dark-leaved heights of Ætna and the plain below, and his rocky bed, furrowing all his back, galls him as he lies upon it.*

The bubbling flow of images increases broken at

* The Odes of Pindar, translated by Paley.

each step by sudden jets, refluxes and leaps whose boldness and enormity permit no translation. It is plain that these Greeks, so lucid and calm in their prose, become intoxicated and are thrown off their balance by lyric inspiration and madness. These are excesses out of all harmony with our blunted organs and our circumspect civilization. Nevertheless we can divine enough of them to comprehend what such a culture contributes to the arts which represent the human form. It shapes man through the chorus; it teaches him attitudes and gestures, the sculptural action; it places him in a group which is a moving bas-relief; it is wholly directed to making him a spontaneous actor, one who performs fervidly and for his own pleasure, who sets himself up as a spectacle to himself, who carries the gravity, freedom, dignity and spirit of a citizen into the evolutions of the figurant and the mimicry of the dancer. The orchestral system provided sculpture with its postures, action, draperies, and groupings; the motive of the Parthenon frieze is the Panathenaic procession, while the Pyrrhica suggests the sculptures of Phigalia and of Budrum.

II.

Alongside of the orchestra there was, in Greece, an institution still more national and which formed the second half of education, the gymnasium. We already meet with it in Homer; his heroes wrestle, launch the discus, and hold foot and chariot races; he who is not skilled in bodily exercises passes for a man of a low class;

> . . . . A mere trader, looking out
> For freight and watching o'er the wares that form
> The cargo.*

The institution, however, is not yet either regular, pure or complete. There are no fixed localities or epochs for the games. They are celebrated as the opportunity offers, on the death of a hero or in honor of a stranger. Many of the exercises which serve to increase vigor and agility are unknown in them; on the other hand, they add exercises with weapons,

* The Odyssey, translated by W. C. Bryant.

the duel even to blood, and practise with the bow and pike. It is only in the following period, as with the orchestral system and lyric poesy, that we see them develope, take root and assume the final shape and importance with which we are familiar. The signal was given by the Dorians, a new population of pure Greek race, who, issuing from the mountains, invaded the Peloponnesus, and, like the Neustrian Franks, introduced their tactics, imposed their rule and renewed the national life with their intact spirit. They were rude and energetic men bearing some resemblance to the mediæval Swiss; not so lively as and much less brilliant than the Ionians; possessing a fondness for tradition, a sentiment of reverence, the instinct of discipline, a calm, virile, and elevated spirit, and whose genius showed its imprint in the rigid severity of their worship, as in the heroic and moral character of their gods. The principal section, that of the Spartans, established itself in Laconia amidst the ancient inhabitants either subdued or under servile dominion; nine thousand families of proud and hard masters in a city without walls, to keep obedient one hundred and twenty thousand farmers

and two hundred thousand slaves, constituted an army immovably encamped amidst enemies ten times more numerous.

On this leading trait all the others depend. The regime, prescribed by the situation, gradually became fixed, and, towards the epoch of the restoration of the Olympic games, it was complete. Individual interests and caprices had disappeared before the idea of public safety. The discipline is that of a regiment threatened with constant danger. The Spartan is forbidden to trade, to follow any pursuit, to alienate his land, and to increase its rent; he is to think of nothing but of being a soldier. If he travels, he may use the horse, slave and provisions of his neighbor; service among comrades is a matter of right, while proprietorship is not strict. The newborn child is brought before a council of elders, and if it is too feeble or deformed, it is put to death; none but sound men are admitted into the army, in which all, from the cradle, are conscripts. An old man past begetting children selects a young man whom he takes to his home, because each household must furnish recruits. Perfect men interchange

wives in order to be better friends; in a camp there is no scrupulousness about family matters, many things being held in common. People eat together in squads, like a mess which has its own regulations and in which each furnishes a part in money or its equivalent. Military duty takes precedence of every thing. It is a reproach to linger at home; barrack life is superior to domestic life. A young bridegroom seeks his wife in secret and passes the day as usual in the drilling-school or on the parade-ground. Children, for the same reason, are military pupils (*agelai*), brought up in common, and, after seven years of age, distributed into companies. In relation to them every perfected adult is an elder, an officer (Paidonomos), and can punish them without paternal interference. Barefoot, clothed with a single garment, and with the same dress in winter as in summer, they march through the streets, silently and with downcast eyes, like so many youthful conscripts to the recruiting-station. Costume is a uniform, and habits, like the gait, are prescribed. The young sleep on a heap of rushes, bathe daily in the cool waters of the Eurotas, eat little and fast, and

live worse in the city than in the camp, because the future soldier must be hardened. Divided into troops of a hundred, each under a young chief, they fight together with fists and feet, which is the apprenticeship for war. If they wish to add any thing to their ordinarily meagre diet, they must steal it from the dwellings or the farms: a soldier must know how to keep himself alive by marauding. Now and then they are let loose in ambush on the highways, and, at evening, they kill belated Helots: a sight of blood is a good thing, and it is well to get the hand in early.

As to the arts, these consist of those suitable for an army. The Dorians brought along with them a special type of music, the Dorian mode, the only one, perhaps, whose origin is purely Grecian.* It is of a grave, manly, elevated character, very simple and even harsh, admirable for inspiring patience and energy. It is not left to individual caprice; the law prohibits the introduction of the variations, enervations and fancies of the foreign style; it is a public

* Plato, in the "Theages," says, speaking of the good man who discourses on virtue, "In the wonderful harmony of action and speech we recognize the Dorian mode the only one which is truly Greek."

and moral institution; as with the drum and the bugle-call in our regiments, it regulates marches and parades; there are hereditary flute-players similar to the bagpipers of the Scottish clans.* The dance itself is a drill or a procession. Boys, after five years of age, are instructed in the Pyrrhica, a pantomime of armed combatants, who imitate manœuvres of defense and attack, every attitude taken and every movement made with a view to strike, ward off, draw back, spring forward, stoop, bend the bow and launch the pike. There is another named "anapale," in which young boys simulate wrestling and the pancratium. There are others for young men; others for young girls, in which there is violent jumping, "leaps of the stag," and headlong races where, "like colts and with streaming hair, they make the dust fly."† The principal ones, however, are the gymnopædia, grand reviews, in which the whole nation figures distributed in choruses. That of the old men sang, "Once were we young men filled with strength;" that of the young men responded, "We of to-day are thus endowed;

* See the "Fair Maid of Perth," by Walter Scott; and the combat of the Clan Chele and Clan Chattan

† Aristophanes.

let him who is so disposed make trial of us;" that of the children added; "And we, at some future day, will be still more valiant."* All, from infancy, had learnt and rehearsed the step, the evolutions, the tone and the action; nowhere did choral poesy form vaster and better regulated *ensembles.* If nowadays we would find a spectacle very remotely resembling this, but still analogous, St. Cyr, with its parades and drills and, still better, the military gymnastic school, where soldiers learn to sing in chorus, might perhaps, suffice.

There is nothing surprising in a city of this kind

* CHORUS OF OLD MEN.

We are old and feeble now;
Feeble hands to age belong;
But when o'er our youthful brow
Fell the dark hair, we were strong.

CHORUS OF YOUNG MEN.

Though your youthful strength departs
With your children it endures;
In our arms and in our hearts
Lives the valor that was yours.

CHORUS OF BOYS.

We shall soon that strength attain;
Deeds like yours shall make us known,
And the glory we shall gain
Haply may surpass your own.

BRYANT: translated from the Greek.

organizing and perfecting gymnastics. At the cost of his life a Spartan had to be equal to ten Helots; as he was hoplite and foot-soldier and had to fight man to man, in line and resolutely, a perfect education consisted of that which formed the most agile and most robust gladiator. In order to obtain this it began previous to birth; quite the opposite of other Greeks the Spartans not only prepared the male but likewise the female, in order that the child which inherited both bloods should receive courage and vigor from his mother as well as from his father.* Girls have their gymnasia and are exercised like boys, nude or in a short tunic, in running, leaping, and throwing the discus and lance; they have their own choruses; they figure in the gymnopædia along with the men. Aristophanes, with a tinge of Athenian raillery, admires their fresh carnation, their blooming health and their somewhat brutal vigor.† The law, moreover, fixes the age of marriages, and allots the most favorable time and circumstances for generating good progeny. There is some chance for parents of

* Xenophon, The Lacedemonian Republic.

† The part of Lampito in the "Lysistrata."

this description producing strong and handsome children; it is the system of horse-trainers, and is fully carried out, since all defective products are rejected.—As soon as the infant begins to walk they not only harden and *train* it, but again they methodically render it supple and powerful; Xenophon says that they alone among the Greeks exercised equally all parts of the body, the neck, the arms, the shoulders, the legs and, not merely in youth but throughout life and every day, and in camp twice a day. The effect of this discipline is soon apparent. "The Spartans," says Xenophon, "are the healthiest of all the Greeks, and among them are found the finest men and the handsomest women in Greece." They overcame the Messenians who fought with the disorder and impetuosity of Homeric times; they became the moderators and chiefs of Greece, and at the time of the Median wars their ascendancy was so well established that, not only on land but at sea, when they had scarcely any vessels, all the Greeks, and even the Athenians, received generals from them without a murmur.

When a people becomes first in statesmanship

and in war its neighbors closely or remotely imitate the institutions that have given it the supremacy. The Greeks gradually borrow from the Spartans, and, in general, from the Dorians, the important characteristics of their habits, regime and art; the Dorian harmony, the exalted choral poesy, many of the ceremonies of the dance, the style of architecture, the simpler and more manly dress, the more rigid military discipline, the complete nudity of the athlete, gymnastics worked up into a system. Many of the terms of military art, of music and of the palestra, are of Doric origin or belong to the Dorian dialect. Already in the ninth century (B.C.) the growing importance of gymnastics had shown itself in the restoration of games, which had been interrupted, while innumerable facts show, evidently, that they annually became more popular. Those of Olympia in 776 serve as an era and a chronological starting-point for a series of years. During the two subsequent centuries those of Pytho, of the Corinthian Isthmus and of Nemea are established. They are at first confined to the simple race of the stadium; to this is added in succession the double race of

the stadium, wrestling, the pentathlon, pugilism, the chariot race, the pancratium and the horse race; and next, for children, the foot race, wrestling, the pancratium, boxing, and other games, in all twenty-four exercises. Lacedemonian customs overcome Homeric traditions; the victor no longer obtains some prized object but a simple crown of leaves; he ceases to wear the ancient girdle, and, at the fourteenth Olympiad, strips himself entirely. The names of the victors show that they come from all parts of Greece, from Magna Græcia, the islands and the most distant colonies. Henceforth there is no city without its gymnasium; it is one of the signs by which we recognize a Grecian town.* The first one at Athens dates from about the year 700. Under Solon there were already three large public gymnasia and a number of smaller ones. The youth of sixteen or eighteen years passed his hours there as in a *lycée* of day-scholars arranged, not for the culture of the mind, but for the perfect development of the body. The study of grammar and music seems indeed to have ceased in order that the young

* An expression by Pausanias,

man might enter a higher and more special class. The gymnasium consisted of a great square with porticoes and avenues of plane-trees, generally near a fountain or a stream, and decorated with numerous statues of gods and crowned athletes. It had its master, its monitors, its special tutors and its fête in honor of Hermes; the pupils had a playspell in the intervals between the exercises; citizens visited it when they pleased; there were numerous seats around the race course; people came there to promenade and to look at the young folks; it was a place for gossip; philosophy was born there at a later period. In this school, which resulted in a steady competition, emulation led to excesses and prodigies; men were seen exercising there their whole life. The laws of the Games required those who entered the arena to swear that they had exercised at least ten consecutive months without interruption and with the greatest care. But the men do much more than this; the impulse lasts for entire years and even into maturity; they follow a regimen; they eat a great deal and at certain hours; they harden their muscles by using the strigil and cold water; they

abstain from pleasures and excitements; they condemn themselves to continence. Some among them renew the exploits of fabulous heroes. Milo, it is said, bore a bull on his shoulders, and seizing the rear of a harnessed chariot, stopped its advance. An inscription placed beneath the statue of Phayllos, the Crotonian, stated that he leaped across a space fifty-five feet in width and cast the discus, weighing eight pounds, ninety-five feet. Among Pindar's athletes there are some who are giants.

You will observe that, in the Greek civilization, these admirable bodies are not rarities, so many products of luxury, and, as nowadays, useless poppies in a field of grain; on the contrary, we must liken them to the tallest stems of a magnificent harvest. They are a necessity of the State and a demand of society. The Hercules I have cited were not merely for parade purposes. Milo led his fellow-citizens to combat, and Phayllos was the chief of the Crotonians who came to aid the Greeks against the Medes. A general of those days was not a strategist with a map and spy-glass occupying an elevation; he fought, pike in hand, at the

head of his forces, body to body, and as a soldier Miltiades, Aristides, Pericles, and at a much later period, even Agesilaus, Pelopidas and Pyrrhus use their arms, and not merely their intellect, to strike, parry and assault, on foot and on horseback, in the thickest of the fight; Epaminondas, a statesman and philosopher, being mortally wounded, consoles himself like a simple hoplite for having saved his shield. A victor at the penthalon, Aratus, and the last Grecian leader, found his advantage in his agility and strength on scaling walls and in surprises. Alexander, at the Granicus, charged like a hussar and was the first to spring, like a tumbler, into a city of the Oxydracae. A bodily and personal mode of warfare like this requires the first citizens, and even princes, to be complete athletes. Add to the exigencies of danger the stimulants of festivals. Ceremonies, like battles, demanded trained bodies; no one could figure in the choruses without having passed through the gymnasia. I have stated how the poet Sophocles danced the pæan naked after the victory of Salamis; at the end of the fourth century the same customs still subsisted. Alexander, on

reaching the Troad, threw aside his clothes that he and his companions might honor Achilles by racing around the pillar which marked the hero's grave. A little farther on, at Phasélis, on seeing a statue of the philosopher Theodectes in the public square, he returned after his repast to dance around it and cover it with crowns. To provide for tastes and necessities of this sort, the gymnasium was the only school. It resembles the academies of our later centuries, to which all young nobles resorted to learn fencing, dancing and riding. Free citizens were the nobles of antiquity; there was, consequently, no free citizen who had not frequented the gymnasium; on this condition only could a man be well educated; otherwise he sank to the class of tradesmen and people of a low origin. Plato, Chrysippus and the poet Timocreon were at one time athletes; Pythagoras passed for having taken the prize for boxing; Euripides was crowned as an athlete at the Eleusinian games. Cleisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon, entertaining the suitors of his daughter, provided them with an exercising ground, "in order that," says Herodotus, "he might test their race and education." The body,

in fine, preserved to the end the traces of its gymnastic or servile education; it could be appreciated at a glance, through its bearing, gait, action and mode of dress, the same as, formerly, the gentleman, polished and ennobled by the academies, could be distinguished from the rustic clown or the impoverished laborer.

Even when nude and motionless, the body testified to its exercise by the beauty of its forms. The skin, embrowned and rendered firm by the sun, oil, dust, the strigil and cold baths, did not seem uncovered; it was accustomed to the air; one felt on looking at it that it was in its element; it certainly did not shiver or present a mottled or goose-skin aspect; it was a healthy tissue, of a beautiful tone, indicative of a free and vigorous existence. Agesilaus, to encourage his soldiers, one day caused his Persian prisoners to be stripped; at the sight of their soft white skin the Greeks broke into a laugh and marched onward, full of contempt for their enemies. The muscles were rendered strong and supple; nothing was neglected; the diverse parts of the body balanced each other; the upper section of the arm, which is

now so meagre, and the stiff and poorly-furnished omoplates were filled out and formed a pendant in proportion with the hips and thighs; the masters, like veritable artists, exercised the body so that it might not only possess vigor, resistance and speed, but likewise symmetry and elegance. The "Dying Gaul,"* which belongs to the Pergamenian school, shows, on comparing it with the statues of athletes, the distance which separates a rude from a cultivated body; on the one hand, there is the hair scattered in coarse meshes like a mane, a peasant's feet and hands, a thick skin, inflexible muscles, sharp elbows, swollen veins, angular contours, and harsh lines—nothing but the animal body of a robust savage; on the other hand, all the forms ennobled; at first the heel flabby and weak,† now enclosed in a clean oval; at first the foot too much displayed and betraying its simian origin, now arched and more elastic for the leap; at first the knee-pan articulations and entire skeleton prominent, now half effaced and simply in-

* The author thus designates the statue commonly known under the title of the "Dying Gladiator." Tr.

† See the small bronze archaic Apollo in the Louvre, also the Æginetan statues.

dicated; at first the line of the shoulders horizontal and hard, now inclining and softened—everywhere the harmony of parts which continue and flow into each other, the youth and freshness of a fluid existence as natural and as simple as that of a tree or a flower. Numerous passages could be pointed out in "Menexenus," the "Rivals" and the "Charmides" of Plato, which seize some one of these postures on the wing; a young man thus reared uses his limbs well and naturally; he knows how to bend his body, stand erect, rest with his shoulder against a column, and, in all these attitudes, remain as beautiful as a statue; the same as a gentleman, before the Revolution, had, when bowing, taking snuff or listening, the cavalier grace and ease observable in old portraits and in engravings. It was not the courtier, however, that was apparent in the ways, action and pose of the Greek, but the man of the palæstra. Plato depicts him as hereditary gymnastics fashioned him among a select race: "Charmides, I think that you ought to excel others in all good qualities; for, if I am not mistaken, there is no one present who could easily point out ten Athenian houses, the alliance of which was

likely to produce a better or nobler son than the two from which you are sprung. There is your father's house, which is descended from Critias, the son of Dropidas, whose family has been commemorated in the panegyrical verses of Anacreon, Solon, and many other poets as famous for beauty and virtue and all other high fortune: and your mother's house is equally distinguished; for your maternal uncle Pyrilampes, never met with his equal in Persia at the court of the great king or on the whole continent in all the places to which he went as ambassador, for stature and beauty; that whole family is not a whit inferior to the other. Having such ancestry you ought to be first in all things, and as far as I can see, sweet son of Glaucon, your outward form is no dishonor to them."*

In this scene, which takes us back much farther than its date, even to the best period of the nude form, all is precious and significant. We find in it the traditions of the blood, the result of education, the popular and universal taste for beauty, all the original sources of perfect sculpture. Homer had

* The Dialogues of Plato, "Charmides," translated by Jowett.

mentioned Achilles and Nereus as the most beautiful among the Greeks assembled against Troy; Herodotus named Callicrates, the Spartan, as the handsomest of the Greeks in arms against Mardonius. All the fêtes of the gods and all great ceremonies brought together competitors in beauty. The finest old men of Athens were selected to carry branches in the Panathenaic procession, and the handsomest men at Elis to bear the offerings to the goddess. At Sparta, in the gymnopædia, the generals and prominent men whose figure and external nobility were not sufficiently marked were consigned to the lower ranks in the choral defile. The Lacedemonians, according to Theophrastus, imposed a fine on their king, Archidamus, because he married a woman of short stature, pretending that she would give them kinglets and not kings. Pausanias found competitions of beauty in Arcadia in which women were rivals, and which had lasted for nine centuries. A Persian, related to Xerxes, and a grandee of his army, dying at Achantus, the inhabitants sacrificed to him as a hero. The Segestans had erected a small temple over the grave of Philip, a Crotonian

refugee among them and a victor in the Olympic games, the most beautiful Greek of his day, and to whom during the lifetime of Herodotus, sacrifices were still offered. Such is the sentiment which education had nourished and which in its turn, reacting thereon, made the formation of beauty its end. The race, certainly, was a fine one, but it was rendered still finer through system; will had improved nature, and the statuary set about finishing what nature, even cultivated, only half completed.

We have thus seen during two centuries the two institutions which form the human body, the orchestral and gymnastic systems, born, developed, and diffused around the centres of their origin; spreading throughout the Greek world, furnishing the instruments of war, the decorations of worship, the era of chronology; presenting corporeal perfection as the principal aim of human life and pushing admiration of completed form even to vice.* Slowly, by degrees and at intervals, the art which fashions the statue of metal, wood, ivory or marble, accompanies

* Grecian vice, unknown in the time of Homer, begins, according to all appearances, with the institution of gymnasia. See Becker, "Charicles" (Excursus).

the education which fashions the living statue. It does not progress at the same pace; although contemporary, it remains for these two centuries inferior and simply imitative. The Greeks were concerned about truth before they were concerned about copying it; they were interested in veritable bodies before being interested in simulated bodies; they devoted themselves to forming a chorus before attempting to sculpture a chorister. The physical or moral model always precedes the work which represents it; but it is only slightly in advance; it is necessary that it be still present in all memories the moment that the work is done. Art is an expanded and harmonious echo; it acquires its fulness and completeness when the life, of which it is the echo, begins to decline. Such is the case with Greek statuary; it becomes adult just at the moment the lyric age ends—in the period of fifty years following the battle of Salamis, when, along with prose, the drama and the first researches in philosophy, a new culture begins. We see art suddenly passing from exact imitation to beautiful invention. Aristocles, the Æginetan sculptors, Onatas, Canachus, Pythagoras

of Rhegium, Calamis and Ageladas still closely copied the real form as Verocchio, Pollaiolo, Ghir landaijo, Fra Filippo and Perugino himself; but in the hands of their pupils, Myro, Polycleitus and Phidias the ideal form is set free as in the hands of Leonardo, Michael Angelo and Raphael.

III.

It is not merely men, the most beautiful of all, that Greek statuary has produced; it has likewise produced gods, and, in the united judgment of antiquity, its gods were its masterpieces. To the profound sentiment of corporeal and athletic perfection was added, with the public and with the masters, an original religious sentiment, a conception of the world now lost, a peculiar mode of apprehending, venerating and adoring natural and divine powers. One must figure to himself this particular class of emotions and kind of faith if one would penetrate a little deeper into the soul and genius of Polycleitus, Agoracritus or of Phidias.

It is sufficient to read Herodotus* to see how lively faith still was in the first half of the fifth century. Not only is Herodotus pious, so devout even as

* Herodotus was still living at the epoch of the Peloponnesian war. He alludes to it in Book VII. 137, and in Book IX. 73.

not to presume to give utterance to certain sacred names, or reveal certain legends, but again the entire nation brings to its worship the impassioned and grandiose seriousness simultaneously expressed in the poetry of Æschylus and Pindar. The gods are living and present; they speak; they have been seen like the Virgin and the saints in the thirteenth century.—The heralds of Xerxes having been slain by the Spartans, the entrails of the victims become unfavorable, because the murder offended the dead Talthybios, Agamemnon's glorious herald, whom the Spartans worshipped. In order to appease him two rich and noble citizens go to Asia and offer themselves to Xerxes.—On the arrival of the Persians the cities consult the oracle; the Athenians are ordered to summon their son-in-law to their aid; they remember that Boreas carried off Orythia, the daughter of Erectheus, their first ancestor, and they erect a chapel to him near the Ilyssus. At Delphi the god declares that he will defend himself; thunder-bolts fall on the barbarians, rocks fall and crush them, whilst from the temple of Pallas Pronea issue voices and war-cries, and two heroes of the country of superhu

man stature, Phylacos and Autonoos, succeed in putting the terrified Persians to flight.—Before the battle of Salamis the Athenians import from Ægeria the statues of the Æacides to combat with them. During the fight some travellers near Eleusis see a great cloud of dust and hear the voice of the mystical Iacchus approaching to aid the Grecians. After the battle they offer the gods, as first-fruits, three captive ships; one of them is for Ajax, while they deduct from the booty the money required for a statue of him twelve cubits high at Delphi.—I should never stop if I were to enumerate all the evidences of public piety; it was still fervid among the people fifty years later. "Diopeithes," says Plutarch, "passed a law directing those who did not recognize the existence of the gods or who put forth new doctrines on celestial phenomena to be denounced." Aspasia, Anaxagoras, and Euripides were annoyed or accused, Alcibiades condemned to death, and Socrates put to death for the assumed or established crime of impiety; popular indignation proved terrible against those who had counterfeited or violated the mysteries of Hermes. We see unquestionably in these details,

along with the persistency of the antique faith, the advent of free thought; there was around Pericles, as around Lorenzo de Medici, a small cluster of philosophers and dialecticians; Phidias, like Michael Angelo at a later period, was admitted among them. But in both epochs, legend and tradition filled and had supreme control of the imagination and conduct. When the echo of philosophic discourse reached the soul filled with picturesque forms and made it vibrate, it was to aggrandize and purify divine forms. The new wisdom did not destroy religion; she interpreted it, she brought it back to its foundation, to the poetic sentiment of natural forces. The grandiose conceptions of early physicists left the world as animated and rendered it more august. It is owing, perhaps, to Phidias having heard Anaxagoras discourse on the νοῦς that he conceived his Jupiter, his Pallas, his heavenly Venus, and completed, as the Greeks said, the majesty of the gods.

In order to possess the sentiment of the divine it is necessary to be capable of distinguishing, through the precise form of the legendary god, the great, permanent and general forces of which it is the issue.

One remains a cold and prejudiced idolater if, beyond the personal form, he does not detect, in a sort of half-light, the physical or moral power of which the figure is the symbol. This was still perceptible in the time of Cimon and Pericles. Studies in comparative mythology have recently shown that Grecian myths, related to Sanscrit myths, originally expressed the play of natural forces only, and that language had gradually formed divinities from the diversity, fecundity and beauty of physical elements and phenomena. Polytheism, fundamentally, is the sentiment of animated, immortal and creative nature, and this sentiment lasts for eternity. The divine impregnated all things: these were invoked; often in Æschylus and Sophocles do we see man addressing the elements as if they were sacred beings with whom he is associated to conduct the great chorus of life. Philoctetes, on his departure, salutes "ye watery nymphs of the meadows, and thou manly roar of ocean dashing onwards. Farewell, thou sea-girt plain of Lemnos, and waft me safely with fair voyage thither, whither mighty fate conveys me."*

* The Tragedies of Sophocles: Oxford translation.

Prometheus, bound to his crag, calls on all the mighty beings who people space:—"O divine æther and ye swift-winged breezes, and ye fountains of rivers, and countless dimpling of the waves of the deep; and thou Earth, mother of all,—and to the all-seeing orb of the Sun, I appeal! Look upon me what treatment I, a God, am enduring at the hand of the Gods!"*

The spectators simply let lyric emotion lead them on in order to obtain primitive metaphors, which, without being conscious of it, were the germs of their faith. "The serene sky," says Aphrodite, in one of the lost pieces of Æschylus, "delights to embrace the Earth, and Love espouses her; the rain which falls from the life-giving Sky fecundates the Earth who then brings forth for mortals pasturage for cattle and the corn of Demeter." To comprehend this language we have only to leave behind us our artificial towns and formal culture. The solitary wanderer among mountains or by the seaside who surrenders himself wholly to the aspects of an intact nature soon holds communion with her; she

* Æschylus: translated by Buckley. Bohn's Classical Library.

becomes animated for him like a physiognomy mountains, threatening and motionless, become bald headed giants or crouching monsters; the waves which toss and gleam become laughing and playful creatures; the grand silent pines resemble serious virgins; and on contemplating the radiant blue southern sea, adorned as if for a festival, wearing the universal smile of which Æschylus speaks, he is at once led, in expressing the voluptuous beauty whose infinity penetrates and surrounds him, to name that goddess born of sea-foam who, rising above the waves, comes to ravish the hearts of mortals and of gods.

When a people is conscious of the divine life of natural objects it has no trouble in distinguishing the natural origin of divine personages. In the golden centuries of statuary this underlying condition of things still peered out beneath the human and definite figure by which legend translated it. Certain divinities, especially those of running streams, mountains and forests, have always remained transparent. The näiad or the oread was simply a young girl like her we see seated on a rock in the

metopes of Olympia,*—at least the figurative and sculptural imagination so expressed it: but in giving it a name people detected the mysterious gravity of the calm forest or the coolness of the spouting fountain. In Homer, whose poems formed the Bible of the Greek, the shipwrecked Ulysses, after swimming a couple of days,

> . . . . . Had reached the mouth
> Of a soft flowing river. . . . . .
> . . . . . He felt
> The current's flow and thus devoutly prayed;
> "Hear me, oh sovereign power, whoe'er thou art,
> To thee, the long desired, I come. I seek
> Escape from Neptune's threatenings on the sea;
> . . . . . To thy stream I come
> And to thy knees from many a hardship past
> Oh thou that here art ruler, I declare
> Myself thy suppliant. Be thou merciful."
> He ceased; the river stayed his current, checked
> The billows, *smoothed them to a calm*, and gave
> The swimmer a safe landing at his mouth!

It is evident that the divinity here is not a bearded personage concealed in a cavern, but the flowing river itself, the great tranquil and hospitable current. Likewise the river, angered at Achilles:

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* In the Louvre.

"——Spake, and wrathfully he rose against
Achilles,—rose with turbid waves, and noise,
And foam, and blood, and bodies of the dead.
One purple billow of the Jove-born stream
Swelled high and whelmed Achilles. Juno saw
And trembled lest the hero should be whirled
Downward by the great river, and in haste
She called to Vulcan, her beloved son;—
. . . . . .
——Then the god
Seized on the river with his glittering fires.
The elms, the willows, and the tamarisks
Fell, scorched to cinders, and the lotus-herbs,
Rushes, and reeds that richly fringed the banks
Of that fair-flowing current were consumed.
The eels and fishes, that were wont to glide
Hither and thither through the pleasant depths
And eddies, languished in the fiery breath
Of Vulcan, mighty artisan. The strength
Of the great river withered, and he spake:—
"O Vulcan, there is none of all the gods
Who may contend with thee. I combat not
With fires like thine. Cease then."*

Six centuries later, Alexander, embarking on the Hydaspes and standing on the prow, offered libations to the river, to the other river its sister, and to the Indus who received both and who was about to bear him. To a simple and healthy mind, a river, especially if it is unknown, is in itself a divine power; man, before it, feels himself in the presence of one, eternal

* The Iliad, Book XVI: translated by W. C. Bryant

being, always active, by turns supporter and destroyer, and with countless forms and aspects; an inexhaustible and regular flow gives him an idea of a calm and virile existence but majestic and superhuman. In ages of decadence, in statues like those of the Tiber and the Nile, ancient sculptors still remembered the primitive impressions, the large torso, the attitude of repose, the vague gaze of the statue, showing that, through the human form, they were always mindful of and expressing the magnificent, uniform and indifferent expansion of the mighty current.

At other times the name disclosed the nature of the god. Hestia signifies the hearthstone; the goddess never could be wholly separated from the sacred flame which served as the nucleus of domestic life. Demeter signifies the mother earth; ritualistic epithets call her a divinity of darkness, of the profound and subterranean, the nurse of the young, the bearer of fruits, the verdant. The sun, in Homer, is another god than Apollo, the moral personage being confounded in him with physical light. Numerous other divinities, "Horae," the Seasons, "Dice," Justice, "Nemesis," Repression, bear their sense

along with their name into the soul of the worshipper. I will cite but one of these, "Eros," Love, to show how the Greek, intellectually free and acute, united in the same emotion the worship of a divine personage and the divination of a natural force. "Love," says Sophocles, "invincible in strife; Love, who overcomest all powers and fortunes, thou dwellest on the delicate cheeks of the young maiden; and thou crossest the sea and entereth rustic cabins, and there are none among the immortals nor among passing men that can escape thee." A little later, in the hands of the convivialists of the Symposium, the nature of the god varies according to diverse interpretations of the title. For some, since love signifies sympathy and concord, Love is the most universal of the gods, and, as Hesiod has it, the author of order and harmony in the world. According to others he is the youngest of the gods, for age excludes love: he is the most delicate for he moves and rests on hearts, the tenderest objects and only on those which are tender; he is of a subtle, fluid essence, because he enters into souls and leaves them without their being aware of it; he has the tint of a flower

because he lives among perfumes and flowers. According to others, finally, Love being desire and, therefore, the lack of something, is the child of Poverty—meagre, slovenly and barefoot, sleeping in beautiful starlight, athirst for beauty and therefore bold, active, industrious, persevering and a philosopher. The myth revives of itself and passes through more than a dozen forms in the hands of Plato.—In the hands of Aristophanes we see the clouds becoming, for a moment, almost counterpart divinities; and if, in the Theogony of Hesiod, we follow the half considered, half involuntary confusion which he establishes between divine personages and physical elements;* if we remark that he enumerates "thirty thousand guardian gods of the nursing earth;" if we remember that Thales, the first physicist and the first philosopher said every thing is born of water, and, at the same time, that every thing is full of gods, we can comprehend the profound sentiment which then sustained Greek religion; the sublime emotion, the admiration, the veneration with which

* See especially the generation of diverse gods in the Theogony. His mind throughout floats between cosmology and mythology.

the Greek divined the infinite forces of animated nature under the images of his divinities.

All, indeed, were not incorporated with objects to the same extent. Some there were, and they were the most popular, which the more energetic labor of legend had detached and erected into distinct personages. The Greek Olympus may be likened to an olive tree towards the end of the summer. The fruit, according to the height and position of the branches, is more or less advanced; some of it, scarcely formed, is little else than a swollen pistil and belongs strictly to the tree; some again, already ripe, is still fast to the branch; some, finally, is thoroughly matured and fallen, and it requires no little attention to recognize the peduncle which bore it. So, the Greek Olympus, according to the degree of transformation which humanizes natural forces, presents, in its different stages, divinities in which physical character prevails over personal configuration; others in which the two phases are equal; others, at length, in which the god, become human, is only attached by a few threads, one thread only being sometimes visible, to the elementary phenomenon from which it issues. To this,

nevertheless, it is attached. Zeus, who in the Iliad is the head of an imperious family, and in "Prometheus" an usurping and tyrannical king, ever remains in many points, what he was at first, a rainy and thunder-striking sky: consecrated epithets and ancient locutions indicate his original nature; the streams "flow from him," "Zeus rains." In Crete his name signifies day; Ennius, at Rome, will tell you later that he is that "sublime, glowing brightness which all invoke under the name of Jupiter." We see in Aristophanes that for the peasantry, rural people, simple minded and somewhat antique, he is always Him who "waters the ground and causes the growth of the corn." On being told by a sophist that there is no Zeus, they are surprised and demand who it is that bursts forth in flashes of lightning or descends in the showers? He struck down the Titans, the monster Typhoes with a hundred dragons' heads, the black exhalations which, born of the earth, interlace like serpents and invade the celestial canopy. He dwells on mountain summits touching the heavens, where clouds gather, and from which the thunder descends; he is the Zeus of Olympus,

the Zeus of Ithome, the Zeus of Hymettus. Like all the gods he is, in substance, multiple, connected with various places in which man's heart is most sensible of his presence, with diverse cities and even diverse families, which, having embraced him within their horizons, appropriated him to themselves and sacrificed to him. "I conjure thee," says Tecmessa, "by the Zeus of thy hearthstone." To form an exact impression of the religious sentiment of a Greek we must imagine a valley, a coast, the whole primitive landscape in which a people fixed itself; it is not the firmament in general, nor the universal earth which it appreciates as divine beings, but its own firmament with its own horizon of undulating mountains, the soil it inhabits, the woods and the flowing streams in the midst of which it lives; it has its own Zeus, its own Poseidon, its own Hera, its own Apollo the same as its own woodland and water nymphs. At Rome, in a religion which had better preserved the primitive spirit, Camillus said; "There is not a place in this city that is not impregnated with religion and which is not inhabited by some divinity." "I do not fear the gods of your country, for I owe them nothing,"

says one of the characters of Æschylus. Properly speaking, the god is local;* he is, through his origin, the country itself; hence it is that in the eyes of the Greek his city is sacred, his divinities being one with that city. When, on his return, he hails it, it is not, as with Tancred, a poetic compliment; he is not merely glad, like a modern, again to see familiar objects and to return to his home; his beach, his mountains, the walled enclosure harboring his countrymen, the highway with its tombs preserving the bones and manes of its hero-founders, all that surrounds it is for him a species of temple. "Argos, and ye its native gods," says Agamemnon, "I first salute thee, ye who have aided me in my return and in the vengeance I have taken of the city of Priam!" The closer we examine it the more do we find their sentiment earnest, their religion justifiable, their worship well-founded; only later, in times of frivolity and decline, did they become idolatrous. "If we represent the gods by human figures," they said, "it is because no other form is more beautiful." But beyond the expressive form, they saw floating, as in a dream, th

* "La Cité Antique," by Fustel de Coulanges.

universal powers which govern the soul and the universe.

Let us follow one of their processions, that of the great Panathenæa, and try to define the thoughts and emotions of an Athenian who, taking part in the solemn cortege, came to visit his gods. It was held at the beginning of the month of September. For three days the whole city witnessed the games, first, at the Odeon, the pompous orchestral series, the recitation of Homer's poems, competitions for voice, cithern and flute, choruses of nude youths dancing the pyrrhica, and others, clothed, forming a cyclic chorus; next, in the stadium, every exercise of the naked body—wrestling, boxing, the pancratium and the pentathlon for men and for children; the simple and double race for naked and armed men; the foot-race with flambeaux; the race with horses and the chariot race with two and four horses in the ordinary chariot and that of war with two men, one of whom jumping down, followed alongside running and then remounted at a bound. Pindar says that "the gods were the friends of games," and that they could not be better honored than by such spectacles.—On the

fourth day the procession occurred of which the Parthenon frieze has preserved the image; at the head marched the pontiffs, aged men selected among the handsomest, virgins of noble families, the deputations of allied cities with offerings, then the bearers of chased gold and silver vases and utensils, athletes on foot or on horseback or on their chariots, a long line of sacrificers and their victims, and finally the people in their festal attire. The sacred galley was put in motion bearing on its mast the peplus or veil for the statue of Pallas which young girls, supported in the Erectheion, had embroidered. Setting out from the Ceramicus it marched to Eleusis,* making the circuit of the temple, passed along the northern and eastern sides of the Acropolis and halted near the Areopagus. There the veil was taken down to be borne to the goddess, while the cortege mounted the immense marble flight of steps, one hundred feet long by seventy wide, leading to the Propylæa and the vestibule of the Acropolis. Like the corner of ancient Pisa in which the Cathedral, the Leaning Tower, the Campo-Santo and the Baptistery are crowded togeth-

* Beule, "L'Acropole d'Athènes."

er, this abrupt plateau, wholly devoted to the gods, disappeared under sacred monuments, temples, chapels, colossi and statues; but with its four hundred feet of elevation it commanded the entire country; between the columns and angles of the edifices, in profile against the sky, the Athenians could embrace the half of their Attica—a circle of barren mountains scorched by the summer sun, the sparkling sea framed in by the dull prominence of its coasts, all the grand eternal existences in which the gods were rooted; Pentelica with its altars and the distant statue of Pallas Athena; Hymettus and Anchesmus where the colossal effigies of Zeus still marked the primitive relationship between lofty summits and the thunder-riven sky.

They bore the veil onward to the Erechtheum, the most imposing of their temples, a veritable shrine where the palladium, fallen from heaven, was kept, the tomb of Cecrops and the sacred olive, the parent of all the rest. There, the whole legend, all its ceremonies and all its divine names, exalted the mind with a vague and grandiose souvenir of the early struggles and first steps taken in human civili

zation; man, in the half-light of the myth, obtained a glimpse of the antique and fecund strife of water, earth and fire; the earth emerging from the waters, becoming productive, overspread with kindly plants and nutritive grains and trees, growing in population and getting humanized in the hands of secret powers, who contend with savage elements and gradually, athwart their chaos, establish the ascendancy of mind. Cecrops, the founder, is symbolized by a creature of the same name as his own, the grasshopper (Kerkops), which was believed to be born of the earth, an Athenian insect if he was of it, a melodious and meagre inhabitant of the arid hills, and of which old Athenians bore the image in their hair. Alongside of him, the first inventor, Triptolemus, the thresher of grain, had Dysaules, the double furrow, for his father and Gordys, barley, for his daughter. Still more significant was the legend of Erectheus, the great ancestor. Among the crudities of an infantile imagination, which näively and oddly expresses his birth, his name, signifying the fertile soil, the name of his daughters pure Air, the Dew and the Rain, manifest the idea of the dry earth fe-

cundated by nocturnal humidity. Numerous details of the worship serve to demonstrate its sense. Maidens who embroidered the veil are called Arrhephores, the bearers of dew; they are symbols of the dew which they go for at night in a cave near the temple of Aphrodite. Thallo, the season of flowers, and Karpo, the season of fruits, honored near by, are, again, names of agricultural gods. The sense of all these expressive titles is buried in the Athenian mind; he feels in them, contained by them and indistinct, the history of his race; satisfied that the manes of his founders and ancestors continued to live around the tomb, extending their protection over those who honored their graves, he supplied them with cakes, honey and wine, and, depositing his offerings, embraced in one look, behind and before him, the long prosperity of his city and hopefully associated its future with its past.

On leaving the ancient sanctuary where the primitive Pallas sat beneath the same roof as Erechtheus he saw, almost facing him, the new temple built by Ictinus in which she dwelt alone, and where every thing declared her glory. What she was in early

days he scarcely felt; her physical origin had vanished under the development of her moral personality but enthusiasm is of searching insight, and fragments of legends, hallowed attributes and traditional epithets led the mind towards the remote sources from which she had issued. She was known to be the daughter of Zeus, the thunder-striking sky, and born of him alone; she had sprung from his brow amidst lightning and the tumult of the elements; Helios had stood still, the Earth and Olympus had trembled, the sea had arisen, a golden shower and luminous rays had overspread the Earth. Primeval men probably had first worshipped, under her name, the serenity of the illuminated atmosphere; they had prostrated themselves on their knees before this sudden virginal brightness, possessed with the invigorating coolness which follows the storm; they had compared her to a young, energetic* girl, and had named her Pallas. But in this Attica, where the glory and transparency of the immaculate ether are purer than elsewhere, she had become Athenæ, the Athenian. Another of her earliest surnames, Tritogeneia, born of water, also re-

* The primitive meaning, probably, of the word Pallas.

minded them that she was born of celestial rains or made them imagine the luminous reflections of the waves. Other traces of her origin were the color of her sea-green eyes and the choice of her bird, the owl, whose eyeballs at night are clairvoyant lights. Her figure, by degrees, had become distinct and her history expanded. Her convulsive birth had made of her an armed and terrible warrior, the companion of Zeus in his conflicts with the rebellious Titans. As virgin and pure light she had gradually become thought and intelligence, and she was called industrious because she had invented the arts; the rider because she had bridled the horse; the benefactor because she removed maladies. Her good deeds and her victories were all figured on the walls, and the eyes which, from the façade of the temple, were directed to the immense landscape, embraced simultaneously the two moments of religion, one explained by the other and united in the soul through the sublime sensation of perfect beauty. To the south, on the horizon, they gazed on the infinite sea, Poseidon, who embraces and shakes the earth, the azure god whose arms encircle the coast and the isles, and, with-

out turning the eye, they beheld him again under the western crown of the Parthenon, erect and turbulent, rearing his muscular torso and powerful nude body with the indignant air of an angered god, whilst behind him Amphitrite, the almost naked Aphrodite on the knees of Thalassa, Latona with her two children, Leucothea, Halirrhothius and Eurytus disclosed in the waving inflection of their infantile or feminine forms, the grace and play, the freedom and eternal smile of the sea. On the same marble front Pallas, victorious, subdued the horses which Poseidon, with a blow of his trident caused to spring from the ground, driving them towards the divinities of the soil, to Cecrops the founder, to their first ancestor Erechtheus, the man of the earth, to his three daughters who moisten the parched ground, to Callirhoe the beautiful fountain and to Ilissus the shaded rivulet; the eye had only to turn downward after having contemplated their images to discern them in real significance beneath the plateau.

But Pallas herself radiated throughout the entire space. There was no need of reflection or of science, it needed only the eyes and heart of a poet or an artist

to arrive at the affinity of the goddess with natural objects, to feel her present in the splendor of the bright atmosphere, in the glow of the agile light, in the purity of that delicate atmosphere to which the Athenians attributed the vivacity of their invention and their genius; she herself was the genius of the territory, the spirit itself of the nation; it was her benefactions, her inspiration, her work which they beheld everywhere displayed as far as the eye could see; in the olive groves and on the diapered slopes of tillage, in the three harbors swarming with arsenals and crowded with vessels, in the long and strong walls by which the city joined the sea; in the beautiful city itself, which, with its temples, its gymnasia, its Pnyx, all its rebuilt monuments and its recent habitations, covered the back and declivities of the hills and which through its arts, its industries, its festivals, its invention, its indefatigable courage, becoming the "school of Greece," spread its empire over the sea and its ascendancy over the entire nation.

At this moment the gates of the Parthenon might open and display among offerings, vases,

crowns, armor, casques, and silver masks, the colossal effigy, the Protectress, the Virgin, the Victorious, erect and motionless, her lance resting against her shoulder, her buckler standing by her side, holding a Victory of ivory and gold in her right hand, the golden ægis on her breast, a narrow casque of gold on her head, in a grand gold robe of diverse tints; her face, feet, hands and arms relieving against the splendor of her weapons and drapery with the warm and vital whiteness of ivory; her clear eyes of precious stones gleaming with fixed brilliancy in the semi-obscurity of the painted cella. In imagining her serene and sublime expression, Phidias, certainly, had conceived a power which surpassed every human standard—one of those universal forces which direct the course of things, the active intelligence which, at Athens, was the soul of the country. He heeded, perhaps, in his breast, the reverberating echo of the new physical system and philosophy which, still confounding spirit and matter, considered thought as "the purest and most subtle of substances," a sort of ether everywhere diffused to produce and maintain the order of the uni-

verse;* in his mind was thus formed a still higher conception than that of the people; his Pallas surpassed that of Ægina, already so grave, in all the majesty of the things of eternity.

Through a long circuit, and in gradually approximating circles, we have traced the original sources of the statue, and we have now reached the vacant space, still recognizable, where its pedestal formerly stood, and from which its august form has disappeared.

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* According to the text of Anaxagoras, Phidias had listened to Anaxagoras in the house of Pericles the same as Michael Angelo listened to the Platonists of the Renaissance in the domicile of Lorenzo de Medici.

THE END.

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